A SUMMER IN KIEFF

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OR

SUNNY DAYS IN SOUTHERN RUSSIA

BY

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CHAPTER I.

The Pilgrim Resolves to go to Russia alone—Is Confirmed in her Resolve by Opposition of Well-meaning People who know nothing about it—General Opinion among Friends that going to Russia means running the Hazard of Imprisonment, Siberia, or Violent Death—Preliminary Worries—The Start from Charing Cross—Channel Passage modestly Veiled.



EVERYBODY said I couldn't do it! I am not a bold, strong-minded person, and perhaps if everybody had not been so confident, I should have taken to brooding over the difficulties of the pilgrimage, and either put off my trip to Russia until I could find fitting escort, or have given up the idea altogether. But nothing puts me on my mettle so effectively as a challenge like that, and I determined to go through it with a brave countenance, though I should quake at heart all the way.

"If it were a little bit of a Scotch tour, to the Trossachs, or down the Clyde——" said one lady friend.

"With the tourist carefully consigned to the steamboat captain's particular care?" I remarked sarcastically.

—"Or even a trip to London," continued the lady.

"Duly labelled, and handed over to the guard," I put in.

"Yes," said the good creature, deaf to irony; "but to think of crossing half the world, through a host of people who can't speak a word in a sensible language, and into Russia! Oh, my goodness!" and my friend succumbed to a want of words, scarcely creditable in a married woman of mature years.

"So you are going to spend two months in Russia," said another. "Do you happen to know that those horrid brutes of Russians have just flogged a woman to death?"

"Yes. What has that to do with me?"

"Well, there is no saying what might happen, you know; they might treat you to something characteristically Russian in the same line."

"They don't flog people to death for going to see their relations, so far as I am aware."

"No; but they punish people first, and make inquiries about their intentions afterwards, I'm told. There wouldn't be much comfort, after you had been imprisoned in a dungeon, or sent to Siberia, in being informed that you were mistaken for somebody else, would there?"

"No," put in a male "Job's comforter"; "and that is just what happened to an Englishman a short time ago. He went to a Russian review on the invitation of an official of standing, and was to be honoured by presentation to the Czar himself. When he got there he found, not the friendly official, but another, who took him for a spy, and gave him two months' imprisonment on the spot. After that they told him they were satisfied that he wasn't somebody else, as they had supposed, but he'd better clear out pretty quick or they might find out that he was several degrees worse, and then boiling oil would be only a trifling introduction to what he would catch."

"If ye hadna traivelled a bit already," said an old friend, who employs the leisure of competent retirement in collecting all the dark deeds of Catholic priests and wicked foreigners from the papers, and looks upon Russians as savages of the most depraved kind, "I wud say it was naething short of sinfu' for your folks to lat ye gang. If ye speered at me, I wud say *dinna* gang on *ony* account; but that wudna' keep ye, seein' ye 're a woman. Nevertheless ye may thank your stars ye're no a Jew at this time, since ye *maun* gang."

"A plague on all your dismal counsels!" I exclaimed at last. "One would think half the Russian population was employed in putting the other half in dungeons and sending all strangers to keep them company. I *am* going, and alone, too, and all the head-shaking in the world will not turn me from my purpose."

What to take was the next consideration, and there were as many utterly unreliable suggestions about that as one gets cures for a cold.

"You must take heavy clothes," said one; "Russia is a dreadfully cold place."

"You will only require light things at this time of the year," said another; "it is very warm in Russia just now."

"You'll have to be prepared for all kinds of weather on so long a journey," advised a third. "I should take a good mixture, if I were you."

"Ye shouldna' tak' onything worth stealin'," groaned the Russophobist. "Rooshian officials are a pack o' thieves. They'll just tak' your things, and say you're smugglin'. But there's nae use speakin', ye'll just please yersel', being—— "

"One of those incomprehensible creatures called a woman," I interrupted impatiently. "Just so; I *am* going to please myself."

"Quite right, my dear," said my only real helper, who did not pretend to know anything, and made no suggestions whatever. "Those people would make a regular Balaam's ass of a body, if one were foolish enough to listen to them."

I understood the misquotation, and did not try to clear up the innocently profane confusion of Scripture and fable.

There was much to do and little time to get everything ready. Of course there were obstacles. Stupid people are always on hand to hinder one's progress when one is in a hurry. One has only to

get a little experience to acknowledge the plain truth of Carlyle's remark about fools, and wonder why thousands of commonly-intelligent people had not made it before him.

I was determined not to be hampered by a variety of trunks, so ordered an immense oblong travelling-basket which would hold everything except the little indispensables required on the way. I did this in good time, but day after day passed, the "things" finally selected for myself, and the host of other things I was expected to take to my friends abroad heaped up everywhere, waiting to be packed, but still no basket came.

Other people do not always realize the importance of such an undertaking either. Brothers, for instance, are simply a weariness of the flesh at such a time. Mine has no conception of the importance of a lady's arrangements for a protracted absence from home, and nothing will induce him to respect a woman's right to make a little confusion on such an occasion.

He said sarcastic things, too, and put me to open shame before visitors. For example, he would come stamping in, and commence tumbling my dearest treasures as if he were making hay.

"What are you poking about for, C——?" I would ask; "don't touch that frilling, if you love me!"

"I want my cigarette-case. I know it's about here somewhere, if I could move those heaps of frivol.to see."

"No, it's not. I found it would just do for my

needles and pins. You have plenty of smoking things, and can spare me that."

"Oh, certainly! I can give you a fit-out of smoking requisites if you like; you may want to follow the fashion of Russian ladies, perhaps."

"Thank you; I do not expect to become Russianized to that extent. Ah—h! *don't* sit down on my best hat! *Do* keep away from the sofa!"

"Oh! May I have this chair?"

"Well, if you lean back you will spoil that white silk blouse.

"Oh!! May I stand in a corner anywhere?"

"Of course you may; but you don't mean to say you are going to smoke?"

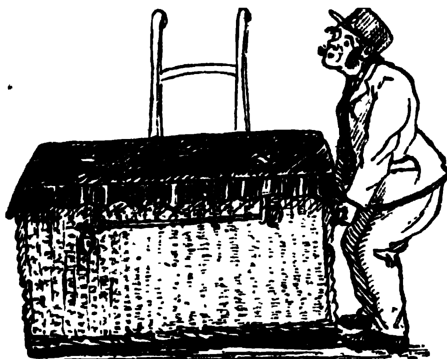
"Oh by no means! *May I go to bed, and be out of the way?*"

"I wish you would—oh no, *don't,* just yet, I have some lace pinned out in your room."

"Oh!!! Well, look here," says the aggravator, severely, "I've stood a great deal since you began your preparations. I have taken buttons in the pudding as a matter of course; buttons may be wholesome, for all I know. I didn't mention a safety-pin in yesterday's soup, *one* safety-pin might not kill a man. I can go out to smoke, but there is a limit to human endurance. If I can't go to bed when I choose I shall give warning. The cat has taken the huff already, and stays out all night since that wicker-work woman fell on him in the dark, and I am surely of as much importance——" Just then a lady-visitor is ushered in, and the grumbler fires a parting shot at me through her.

"If you had known as much as I know, Miss B——, you wouldn't have come. You can't move an elbow here without scrunching pounds' worth of milliner's rubbish, or wrecking untold wealth in haberdashery. The steps outside are not covered—*yet*. You'll find it safest to sit out there and be talked to through the letter-box. 'D' evening, m'selles!"

The basket arrived at last, and I found it a capital idea. It held everything without crushing, and chaos was soon reduced to order. To be sure the



basket was heavy, but I think the porters made the most of it, just to increase the tips. Every cabman and porter who attacked it let it go again, and said something wicked, and then went away for help. Then two or three of them would tackle the hamper with a shout: "Now then, all together, whoop! My stars! ain't this 'ere a bloomin' back-breaker!" and of course I had to augment the intended fee. But, once arrived at Charing Cross, the trouble was over. I had never known the satisfaction of handing over my baggage to responsible people before,

and thoroughly appreciated the registering arrangement, which lifts all the burden from one's mind and makes a continental journey easier in this respect than a twenty-mile run to a British watering-place. For a few shillings I was relieved of my basket, only to get a glimpse of it at intervals, when a Customs examination was made, and I had nothing to look after but a light bag and a strap of wraps.



We were an hour and a half too soon—an hour and a half to lounge about the station, and get chilly; to feel fatigue, which good spirits and constant movement had till then warded off; to look upon the confusion, and running hither and thither of agonized ladies who were perhaps going about ten miles from home, had gentlemen going with them, and yet seemed half distracted. We

might have spent the time comfortably and enjoyably somewhere near at hand, and still have had abundance of time for everything. I shall not make this mistake again. Henceforth I allow ten minutes and no more, though the proposed journey should be to the North Pole. That hour and a half gave me leisure to review my difficulties in twenty ways, each one more appalling than the last, till I felt nervous, spirit-damped, and decidedly fearful. This feeling was augmented by four stupid men in the train, who had crossed the Channel often before, but expected that night's passage to be the very worst they had ever seen.

But there was no looking back now. The Dover pier was reached, time was up, porters were hurrying and shouting, passengers were calling for help and directions in a dozen languages, the narrow way was blocked, and my companions could attend me no further. A hurried leave-taking, and I was carried onwards by the throng, through alternating gulfs of darkness and blazes of confusing light, on board a vessel rocking portentously on the treacherous element, and left at last to curl up under my rug in a corner of the saloon, alone!

The riot on deck reached a climax, and suddenly ceased. I was surrounded by fellow-passengers whose whispered forebodings infected me with a deadly sinking of the heart. We were off!

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Oh—h, let me leave the only-half-conscious horrors of that Channel passage unwritten.

CHAPTER II.

Calais. An obliging Porter insists on helping the Pilgrim to Defraud the Revenue—Charge for Nods and Winks—Another Pilgrim bold enough to resist Extortion—Where are the Sunny Skies of France?—Cologne. The Pilgrim is Defrauded out of Mental and Physical Refreshment—A Dream of Luncheon—Through the Rhine Valley in Rain—Dares to *think* she has seen as good Scenery at Home, but refrains from *saying* so—Darmstadt, and six Hours to wait—First Meal since leaving London—Tea on the Continent—Start in Through Train for Vienna—Turned out at Midnight—The Pilgrim begins to make the Lives of Porters and Conductors a Burden—Advice to intending Travellers who think the World has become English—Innsbruck; and turned out again—Meets a Compatriot—Scotch Crack—Run for Coffee—Disappearance of Train. Despair! Imbecility of Ignorant Man—Appearance of French Angel of Light, and renewed Peace—Warmer Weather—Night Scene in a Cornfield—Arrival at Vienna.



AT Calais a porter took charge of my traps, got me through the very cursory examination of the Custom House, hushing my explanations with a great many nods, nudges and winks, as much as to say, "I know you are smuggling heaps of things, but hold your tongue, and I'll get you through." He then put me into

a comfortless coupé of the train, and I offered him sixpence for his trouble. "Une shelling! Madam," said he; "Une shelling!" evidently charging for the nods and winks. I was too ill to argue the matter with the extortioner, and weakly satisfied his demand. His next client was not so soft. She was a French lady, and flew into a rage when he refused her good English sixpence in the same way as he had mine.

Bouncing out of the carriage, this lady went in search of change and information, and returning in triumph, gave the fellow six sous, and bade him begone for a scoundrel and a cheat.

Another English lady joined us just before the train started; a gentle, quiet woman dressed like a Sister of Mercy going to Brussels to teach her own, and acquire foreign languages. She reminded me strongly of the description of Charlotte Bronte going away alone to make her living. Fearful, timid, and distrustful, even of her fellow-travellers, but *so* ignorant of any word of anything but English, that she would have passed her station had not the French lady told her—when she came to it—that 'Broosell' was the nearest approach the ignorant natives can make to the pronunciation of their own city's name. Dreary and comfortless was that journey—sleepless for me—through poor flat scenery, when daylight revealed it. The prospect was not improved by being seen through drizzling rain, and by chilly tourists who thought they had a right to look for better things on the Continent in July.

All the way from Calais to Vienna we suffered

from depressingly cold and wet weather. Where were the boasted sunny skies and balmy airs the foreigner misses so much when he visits our misty Islands? Gone to London, I believe, where the visiting Frenchman would see and feel them, but still shrug the shoulder, and turn up the nose, and revile them, and say, "'A bas! they cannot compare to those of la belle France." Jacques Bonhomme! you are just another fraud found out. Your skies and weather are very much the same as everybody else's, which after all is a good thing for people who cannot always be inventing original conversation.

Brussels I had only a glimpse of, but it looked strikingly foreign to my just awaking British eyes. I suppose there is nothing uncommon in that. It *is* foreign.

Cologne was my next halting-place, and I expected to get a hurried view of the famous Cathedral, but it turned out I had only twenty minutes to wait, and by the time I had found the platform from which the "Wien" train started, got the refreshment-room, cornered an English-speaking waiter, and ordered my lunch, time was up. My nervous dread of being left behind would not allow me to venture on any of the daring deeds which are things of course when far-travel and much experience has given one confidence. I left my lunch untasted, swallowed a cup of coffee, and made for the train.

I might have taken my own time and a decent meal (I had had none since leaving London), but it was no use worrying. I had a seat in a lovely compartment, upholstered with rose velvet, and fitted up

with every convenience for night as well as day travelling. I had leisure to sit back with closed eyes in a comfortable seat, eat a dry biscuit, and imagine I was enjoying the delightful repast I had paid for, and only got the smell of. One can't have everything.

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As the train passed along the banks of the Rhine the pictures presented by the quaint-looking houses with their brightly-painted shutters would have been very beautiful, no doubt, if they had not been rendered rather dim and sloppy by rain. Everybody pronounces the views in the Rhine valley indescribably beautiful, and it is better to say with everybody than be set down as a soulless Philistine. But I ventured to *think* I had seen as lovely scenery in Scotland, and could often have fancied I was looking out on some familiar scene on the Tay, and nearing home again.

I must not *say* so, however; it sounds so like blasphemy I am content to admit that the Rhine scenery is matchless, and if I did not go into raptures over it, it must be remembered that the weather was too cold and dreary to stimulate enthusiasm over anything.

We journeyed on to Darmstadt, where, not being fortunate enough to catch a through train, I had to submit to a delay of six hours. I found a model waiter here, who changed my money, gave me every kind of information, and endeavoured to make an irksome wait as comfortable as possible. The delay gave me time to enjoy my long-deferred meal,

daudle over the everlasting continental cup of coffee, and write home. I should have had tea, but the friendly waiter warned me against it as gravely as a temperance advocate of our parts would against the flowing bowl. The cheering cup, so dear to the heart of womankind, is unknown on the Continent. They do make a vile decoction which they call tea, but the title is a sinful misnomer, and the travelling Briton who orders it, and thinks to enjoy a refreshing sip of good reviver, is wofully taken in.

We got away from Darmstadt at 10.25 on Sunday night, and I settled myself down for a long journey right through to Vienna; but the ways of the heathen Chinee are not more peculiar than the railways on the Continent. About midnight we stopped at a place called Aschaffenburg, and a man came to the door and remarked, "Madamsiemüssenaussteigen." This at the rate in which it was pronounced was quite beyond me, so I calmly replied, "Nein ich danke Ihnen" (No, thank you), on chance, and sat still. "MADAMSIEMÜSSENAUSSTEIGEN," repeated the man more forcibly.

"No, thank you," I replied again. "I don't want any, go away, my good man," and lay back sleepily on the cushions.

Then that aggravating person drew a long breath and thundered "MADAM, SIE MÜSSEN AUSSTEIGEN," with tremendous emphasis on each word.

"I must get out? Oh, nonsense, I am for Wien."

No matter, "I must make my way out," and out I had to go in utter consternation. Another train

came up, and I rushed to every guard exclaiming, "Durchgehenden Wagen Wien" (a through carriage for Vienna). None of them paid the slightest attention to me till, in desperation, I clutched one by the arm, shewed him a mark (1/-), and parrot-like repeated over and over "Durchgehenden Wagen Wien." He could not get out of my clutches, so giving the regular foreign shrug, he resigned himself to the "mark," walked with me to the restaurant, and produced an individual who could speak a respectable language.

Now was my opportunity. I made known my wants to this man, made him get me a guard and translate to him what I required. I also told him to make the guard understand he was to hand me over to another conductor when he had to leave my train. At every request I gave the interpreter twenty pfennigs, and by the time he had got six of those pieces, my wants were satisfied. The guard was equally corruptible and watched me ever after, as a cat does a mouse. He thought I knew no German, but I understood quite well when he told any one in my presence, "Diese Frau kann nicht Deutsch sprechen" (this lady cannot speak German), or with the inimitable shrug of contempt, "Sie ist English" (she is English), when both would smile and shrug as if the fact accounted for every eccentricity under the sun.

Here let me take the opportunity to remark that the popular idea of the self-conceited Briton, that his language is now so spread over the world that he may go anywhere (on the Continent especially) in

perfect comfort, without troubling himself to acquire even a smattering of anybody else's tongue, is a wretched mistake.

I had a good enough knowledge of German as it is taught in England, and could make myself understood, but what of it, when I could not make out what the Germans were driving at? They would not wait to put every word down for me to look at from my point of view, and answer according to my lights, and colloquial German was as Greek to me. No, no! my complacent friends, the earth is not quite anglicized yet! English may take you blundering and stumbling in an irksome and profitless way over some of the much-trodden paths, but if we are to see, hear, learn, and enjoy ourselves in any foreign country, we must take the trouble to get up the language first.

At Innsbruck I was again politely tumbled out, but made for the restaurant at once, and interviewed every waiter till I found an intelligent one, who made things all right with the guard, as before.

This time I was fortunate enough to meet a Scotch lady travelling with her maid. Her speech made me feel like the Spanish parrot in the poem, but I did not "flap round the cage with joyous screech." We just poured out Dr. Johnson to each other in social crack, and I found out that not only was she Scotch, but was acquainted with some of the "first families" of our own neighbourhood.

I had had nothing to eat since ten o'clock on the previous night, and at the next stoppage my new friend advised me to make a run for some coffee; so,

noting the number and position of the carriage, I made a dive for the restaurant, and in three minutes returned to the same spot. My carriage had vanished! In horror and dismay I ran backwards and forwards, looking into every compartment, questioning, gesticulating, imploring, without result. I was to all appearance left behind! Despair seized me, and this last misfortune might have overwhelmed me completely if a benevolent-looking guard had not crossed my path at that moment. I grabbed him and shewed him my ticket. "Wien?" said he coolly, "nach Wien mussen Sie vier stunden warten" (for Vienna wait four hours). "Nein, nein!" I cried distractedly, "Ich habe eben den zug verlassen!" (I have but now left my train). "Unmoglich!" (impossible!) replied he serenely, with all the confidence of stupid and ignorant mankind I was just on the point of shaking the man, when a hand was laid on my shoulder and a blessed soft voice said, "Par ici, Ma'mselle, s'il vous plait." It was my new friend's French maid, and I went with her gladly, you may be sure.

My train was standing just where I had left it, but with another train hiding it from view.

This was another lesson. There are no platforms as at home. Several trains may be drawn up in the tourist's temporary absence, and confusion is inevitable A *man* might notice that he crossed rails on leaving, and that they were taken up on his return, but a lady on her first long pilgrimage, and continually tormented by a dread of being left behind in an unknown country, may be excused for

overlooking such details, and fairly losing her head under such trials.

We noticed that the temperature became warmer as we advanced. The weather cleared, too, and the moon shone out brightly, revealing many beautiful bits of scenery. One of the most amusing views I have ever seen was a field of grain, cut and set up in comical sheaves, which in the moonlight looked like undersized human beings engaged in various ways. The sheaves were not only tied in the middle like ours, but near the top also, giving them a neck as well as a waist. In one spot a number of these had the appearance of deep devotion, with heads bowed and bodies inclined forward. At another a solitary sheaf seemed to be telling a good story to a row of amused listeners, and, with head and body thrown back, to be laughing heartily at his own joke. Here a fallen sheaf, with two others leaning over it, suggested a tableau of Adam and Eve mourning over Abel, and there two others seemed to be engaged in mortal combat, the one having got the other's head, as the boys say, "in chancery," and to be giving him "what for" without mercy.

At Passau my luggage was examined again, and a great deal of time lost, so that I was now almost certain that I should not reach Vienna in time to catch the Kieff train, and afraid, besides, that I should not be able to go farther without rest. The point was settled for me. I did not reach Vienna until past ten o'clock on Monday night, and then the fun began again.

CHAPTER III.

Bad Conduct of Hotel Tout—Trouble with Cabman—Pilgrim has to Look after her own Baggage—Scotch Fixedness—Arrival at Hôtel Métropole, and Physical Collapse—Advice to Ladies—Profanity *versus* Tears—Continental Beds—Reflections in a big Hotel—The Streets of Vienna—Beggars and Ladies—Bobbies and Babies—Men and Dogs—Off again—A Pole with a Wooden Head—Introduction to a Russian Lady and English Gentleman—Russian Frontier—Scene at the Customs Examination—The Ways of the Russian Official—The Pilgrim passes through the Ordeal Unscathed—How to Escape Inspection—Injudicious Conduct of the Pilgrim—Severe Snub—The Journey Resumed—Russian Trains—Conversation under Difficulties—More Confusion—Notes by the Way—Schmerinka, and Expected Relative not to be Seen—Last Agonies—Arrival of Guide, and Breakdown of Artificial Strength—Arrival at Kieff—Peace.



ALIGHTING from the train at Vienna, I looked about, according to directions, for a porter with "Hôtel Métropole" on his cap, and at length found him. He would have nothing to do with me

because I had not written for rooms. I have been told since that this was only his way of asking for perquisites, and that such treatment should have been reported at the hotel, but I am not the reporting kind of person. A complaint may lead to a dismissal, and once the trouble is over, I cannot help giving way to consideration for the probable wives and families of the wicked.

I got out of the station, signed for a cab, put my traps in, and handed my luggage receipt to the driver, expecting him to go for the baggage. But that is not the custom here, and he jabbered something from which I gathered I was to take his number and go for a porter to fetch my basket. I went off again, feeling rather forlorn, showed my paper to everybody I met, and was told to go "hinauf,"—"hinunter,"—"die andere seite," *i.e.*, "up, down, to the other side," until I was utterly bewildered. At last I found the place, got my baggage to the cab, entered, and thought all my labour done. Vain hope! the cab did not move, and the man kept on jabbering. At length it struck me he wished to be paid, so I handed him some money, but he looked at it with contempt because it was German. Then I showed him a sovereign, but that was as bad. I got angry, and said "Ich will Ihnen im Hotel bezahhlen" ("I will pay you at the hotel"). Still he would not move, and seemed to want me to get out.

My heart was as nearly in my mouth as it could get. The fatigue and weariness of three days and nights of continuous travel, with insufficient food,

lay heavy upon me. The situation was one to provoke a hopeless breakdown if ever there was one, but I recognized the uselessness of that, and called up the Scotch spirit instead. Sitting back doggedly in the cab, I said "Hôtel Métropole." The cabman ordered, gesticulated, stamped and threatened. I looked him calmly in the eye, and repeated, "Hôtel Métropole."

He seemed to have heard that before, but it did not soothe his feelings. He called upon his gods; he invoked the aid of his sainted ancestors for seven generations to help him to convince me of something or other. I replied, softly, "Hôtel Métropole."

Then he implored the spirits of all his distant relations, his grand-uncles and his great-aunts, and his cousins six times removed, and the dead and gone companions of his youth, to give him power to swear, and they did, and he swore, I am *sure* he swore dreadfully, although I did not understand the words, but he could not exorcise me out of his cab. I just sat still and said "Hôtel Métropole."

Then the man gave in, mounted his box in a limp state, and drove off. We had not gone far when the porter, who had brought out the baggage, came running up and stopped us. He wanted money, and I held it out and let him help himself, and he made some arrangement with the cabman. I would have given up anything but the right to be taken to the Hôtel Métropole. I was determined to go there in that cab, though it were through an opposing force of Austrian bayonets. I got there at length, and found an English-speaking porter and waiter.

I had a light supper, and after making the ascent of about three thousand stairs (I mistrusted the lift and did not count the stairs particularly, but it seemed to me the number is about correct), I reached bedroom 295 and—collapsed.

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How often on that journey had I wished that I could don the outward appearance of manhood for a brief period, and relieve my feelings as a man may do in times of great trial and provocation. Any of my difficulties could have been overcome by a man if he bullied and swore—and generally speaking the travelling male person does swear—he thrives on profanity and saves money, while giving way to what everybody calls pardonable sin. But to wretched woman no resource is left but backsheesh or tears, and tears lose half their value abroad. Remember that, my dear sisters. There is no place in the world where a woman's tears are worth so much as in England; keep them, therefore, for home use. But if you mean to travel and have a good delivery, take my advice and learn up some of the most awe-inspiring titles you can find in an entomological work, so that you may objurgate without reproach, and find relief for your overcharged feelings.

I did not make haste to leave my downy couch the next morning. There is a very great difference between the Continental and British ideas of downy couches. At home one is used to associating blankets with comfortable repose. Here a blanket is not considered necessary, nor in fact do they

supply much of anything else in the way of covering. But they *do* give you pillows. Oh, yes, there is no mistake about that. I had pillow enough to serve several small families.

Those immense hotels are not comfortable. I have always a lost-in-a-wilderness sort of feeling when living in one of them. I am oppressed by a sense of littleness, and wonder that one solitary human being is noticed in the crowd of humanity that nightly gathers, but does not mingle, under a roof like this. One sees solitary unhappy-looking people in evident need of sympathy, and happy people able and willing to sympathize with and comfort them, but the fashions of civilization have placed a barrier in the way. In one room there is joy and laughter, in the next tears and misery; a thin partition separates them as effectively as if an ocean rolled between. They sleep, the one to smile as a happy dream reflects a scene of careless reality, the other to start from a nightmare of fancied woe to the waking consciousness of actual sorrow. I hate the everchanging ebb and flow of human life in a big hotel. It seems to me that a lonely girl might shut herself up in her trunk, *à la* "Mistletoe Bough," (the modern receptacle for the things we cannot possibly do without, would hold us easily), and never be missed until the trunk was found to be in the way and advertised, "along with a quantity of bones found therein, said bones to be sold at the nearest rag and bone shop if not claimed within three days."

I had the whole day to spend in Vienna before

resuming my journey, and went for a drive through the beautiful city as the best way to get some idea of its grandeur in the limited time.

It takes a long time to get round the town, as vehicles must enter at one end of a street only, and short cuts cannot therefore be taken advantage of. As a total stranger to foreign ways and manners, I could have spent weeks observing the street scenes alone. The politeness of the people, from the highest to the lowest, is very remarkable. A man in tatters meets a friend no better off than himself, but each is possessed of as good manners as the gentleman who saunters along in the glory of perfect tailoring; the two unfortunates clap their heels together, take off their hats, salaam profoundly, and shake hands with as minute attention to the laws of good manners as the "Duke and Duchess of Plazatoro."

The policeman is quite an ornament to the streets of Vienna; one would think that it should be something of an honour to be taken in charge by a fine officer like this, in his light blue and buff uniform, his smart cap and flashing sword, "all so dashing and so gay." Still more ornamental and strikingly novel were the ladies walking the streets in full dress and fan, with head uncovered, or covered only with a lace mantilla, just as our ladies would appear in the concert-room and theatre. The servant girls and peasant women have no headgear either, but there is no chance of ever mistaking the maid for the mistress. Even on a railway journey the nurse has no travelling-dress—nothing

more than a print skirt and loose jacket. One so dressed came into our compartment with her mistress and baby when near Vienna. The baby had no carrying-robe, as a British baby would have had, only a green frock thrown over a print indoor one, with a little cap and green ribbons as a top dressing. It screamed all the time we had the pleasure of its company, and I don't wonder at it; I should have cried myself had anyone taken me, looking such a fright, among decent people.

The men seem to do all the fine dressing among the lower classes; it looked rather inconsistent to see a swain dressed out in killing raiment, with a girl, minus hat or shawl, hanging on his arm, as they went off to a beer-garden or dancing-saloon.

There are few dogs wandering about aimlessly with their mouths watering for samples of human being; the peasants use them, instead of horses or donkeys, to draw their carts, and the faithful animals seem too hard-worked to think of guile.

. . . . . .

Remembering my difficulties in getting into Vienna, I applied at the hotel for a guide to accompany me to the station, get my ticket, register my luggage, and explain to the guard that he was to take me out and put me in at the right places, and therefore I got on very well till we reached Cracow, where I fell into the hands of a Polish conductor, whom I could get to understand nothing. It was amusing to see him clasp his hands in despair and utter an intense "Ach!" the situation evidently being beyond the powers of his vocabulary. This went

on until four the next afternoon, when, after hammering at his head till I was quite satisfied there was nothing inside, and had given him up, a heaven-sent inspiration came to him, and he understood that I was English. He disappeared, and in a short time returned to introduce a Russian lady who spoke English very well. Then my way was smooth; and, by-and-by, the lady brought an Englishman to know me, and both stayed in my *coupé* till we reached Wolczyska. This gentleman, too, was acquainted with some of "our first families." His look of wonderment when—in reply to his inquiry "if my maid was in the next compartment?"—I said I was quite alone, was funny. I was glad of the Russian lady's help at Wolczyska, where the most complete overhaul of baggage and inspection of passports is made.

Such a scene I had never before witnessed. Such a pandemonium of discordant sounds and confusion of tongues could only be heard in a Russian frontier Custom House, with representatives of nearly all the civilized nations of the world inside, getting their things examined and objecting to the process in all their peculiar methods of expressing dissatisfaction, every method but the English entailing noise. Shouts, screams, oaths, tears, gesticulation almost to the point of assault, made up a spectacle worth going some distance to see. People who are accustomed to refer to Babel as the acme of confusion ought to see Woloczyska. Babel might have been a fair enough sort of side-show, but there were no women in it. There *were* women

at the inspection, lots of them; and, as in every other function to which they are admitted, they gave to this exhibition a characteristic liveliness, making a first-class variety entertainment of what, without them, would probably have been a dull and commonplace piece of business.

Imagine a lady who has carried a set of exquisite china tea-things all the way from Paris safely



wrapped in the many folds of a dress. Imagine also that a rough, consciousless Russian official upsets the lady's trunk on the floor, grabs the dress by the tails, and with one great shake sends the precious ware roofwards, to fall to the ground in a shower and shatter into a thousand pieces. Remember, too, if you please, that the poor woman dare not seize the wretch by the hair of the head and shake him till his soul rattles in his big boots, or

wherever he secretes it, but must find other means to give vent to her feelings.

Such scenes are being played all over the room. All the men (except the Englishmen) roar and swear and gesticulate; all the women rave and scream as their things are pulled about, and sit down to cry as armfuls of dutiable goods are carried away to be valued. The Russian method of packing trunks renders the officers' conduct in upsetting them somewhat excusable. Everything is just pitched in as it comes to hand, and soiled linen, fine dresses, jewellery, bonnets and toilet sundries are all mixed up in frightful confusion.

No man could get an idea of what is in a Russian lady's box without spreading the contents on the floor, and if she carries nothing dutiable, she is no worse off after the inspection than before, but she complains as loudly as the rest for all that. I came off very easily. My things being orderly, were not upset. The officer *did* think he had got something when he felt my slipper bag and dragged it forth with a look of exultation. His changed countenance, as he unfolded a selection of shoes, and his grunt of disgust as he pushed the bag down again and slammed the basket lid, were not the least satisfying part of the entertainment to me. Thus easily passed, I was at leisure to observe other people. I must note here that the behaviour of the humble peasants and Jews, of whom a number were grouped at one part of the room, was in striking contrast to the riotous behaviour of their social superiors. *They* did not shout or swear or make a disturbance.

Perhaps they wished they had something to make a row about. The poor creatures had *nothing* to examine but their passports.

There is one way of escaping the annoyance of a thorough overhaul of one's goods and chattels at a Russian Customs station. It was revealed to me by a travelled Briton who held a position under Government requiring the occasional aid of a laced coat and cocked hat, for the proper support of British dignity. This gentleman had his cocked hat on the top of his other things, and the case caught the eye of the superior officer before the ignorant menial could make his plunge into the depths of the first trunk. "Stoy!" shouted the superior, "the Barin belongs to the English Embassy?"

"No!"

"But he is in the British Governmental Service?"

"Yes!"

The superior turns upon his underling with a terrible frown. "Fool, dolt, ass upon two feet, how dare you meddle the Barin's baggage!"

"Oh! little Father!" cries the menial in dismay, "I had but opened the trunk, I have touched nothing."

"Then shut it again instantly! The Barin will be good enough to point out the rest of his baggage."

The Barin *is* good enough, and everything else passes unopened.

It is unlikely, ladies, that—in the short time of comfortable existence lately fixed for us by the

learned scientist of the British Association—*we* of the down-trodden sex will ever be entitled by right to wear cocked hats as Government servants and supporters of British glory abroad. In fact, for my own part, there are so many advantages connected with our present state of down-troddenness, that I have no great desire for a radical change—but I have an idea that might be useful to some of you who think of going far afield. Why not carry a cocked hat in a case? It would add little to the travelling impedimenta, and all that would be required would be the help of a gentleman to take charge of the case, and push it prominently under the official nose at the proper time. Any gentleman would do it for the sake of passing his own as well as the lady's baggage. The idea is really worth considering. I would carry six cocked hats rather than have my treasures tossed about by a soulless Russian.

After the bustle had somewhat calmed down, I thought I had better look after my passport and get something to eat. Through the open but sentry-guarded door I could see the head official sitting in the next room with all the passports before him as if awaiting applicants, and was about to pass in and ask for my paper, when, with a warlike rattle two firearms were crossed right before my nose, two cold steel bayonets met with blood curdling flash close to my eyes, and—I concluded not to go further. I retired feeling rather worse than if I had suddenly turned a street corner and met cows.

I have since learned how serious a crime it is in

an ordinary mortal to try to hurry a Russian official, and wonder that those guards did not slaughter me on the spot.

After due time—Russian time—our passports were returned to us—English first, be it noticed—and we passed into the refreshment room where the sound of human beings clamouring for food was a good second in the way of noise to the examination, and the various methods of disposing of the victuals as novel, and in some cases, as barbarous, an operation as one could look upon.

When I left Woloczyska I was separated from my pleasant companions who had to take the "Odessa Wagen," while I was placed in that for Kieff. Russian trains are entirely different from ours. Entering at the end of the carriage the passenger crosses the train and turns down a long passage on which the *coupé* doors open. The *coupés* are single, holding three, or double, holding six; but one person may enjoy the comfort of a single *coupé*, or a small party a double one in the first and second classes with the help of the universal tip. Each *coupé* contains a little table which holds books and refreshments, and when not wanted can be let down on hinges. There are also handy hooks on the walls for hanging up extra wraps, and these are fully taken advantage of by travelling Russians, who disburden themselves of their outer garments and travel at ease in dressing gowns.

I had one more trouble before reaching Schmerinka, where my host had arranged to meet me. A Russian lady and gentleman shared the *coupé* with

me, and, as usual, attempted to get up a conversation. "Could I speak Russe?"

"No! Could they speak English?"

A shrug of the shoulders and comical pantomime with outstretched hands is their response, while their faces express a depth of pained regret, which the fact does not seem to call for.

"Parlez-vous Française?" they ask again.

"Nein. Sprechen sie Deutsch?" I respond.

A more intense shrug, and a deeper expression of regret on their part, as they subside with sighs, for the Russian is passionately fond of asking questions, and does not like to be debarred the pleasure of inquiring into the minutest particulars concerning one's personal affairs. Then the Russian gentleman has a thought, and says inquiringly, "Odessa, Madame?"

"Nein," I reply. "Kieff."

"Kieff! Gospiddy! Odessa Wagen! Madame, Odessa Wagen!" cries he, slapping the wall to make me understand I am in the wrong carriage.

Despair and woe take possession of me once more, and I look anxiously for the conductor, and finding him, try to make him understand that I want to go to Kieff, and must on no account be taken to Odessa. The man can make nothing of me, and seems utterly unable to understand what I would have. I return to the charge at every opportunity, growing more desperate over every failure until the Russian gentleman waxes indignant at what he seems to think my very ill-treatment. He takes the guard in hand to give him a regular

shaking up, with the result that he finds the mistake to be his own, and the lady and he are ignominiously trundled out, and I am left in surety and peace.

The faculty of feeling for others in misfortune is not fully developed in everybody but I must claim some share of it. I gave my sympathy to those people with the pure deep satisfaction with which a rich miser gives something he has no use for, to the poor.

The so-called express crawls slowly along, making a halt of about twenty minutes at every station. The passengers go out for tea — the Russian samovar* has taken the place of the coffee-pot now —and the change is welcome. Gentlemen lounge on the open platforms between the carriages and the Russian ladies beguile the time with cigarettes.

There is little to attract the eye in passing through the country, the poverty of the peasants being the most strikingly noticeable feature. A solitary figure, usually a woman, in the poorest and scantiest apparel, tending a single cow, varied by the sorry spectacle of several men and women toiling equally hard, shovelling sand and wheeling it away in barrows, was not a pleasant sight to look out at.

I read and doze uncomfortably by turns and long for the exhilarating feeling of flying through the air to possible destruction, experienced on the Scotch Express. Anything would be better than this soul-wearying snail's pace but Schmerinka is reached at last. There is no one waiting for me !—

* Tea urn.

more palpitation! "Is the Kieff train in?" I demand but there is no intelligible answer. One more agonizing search in the refreshment room for a civilized individual who can speak English! The Kieff train is *not* in but presently it meanders up and my relative steps out of it, to greet me with all the heartiness the occasion demands. My troubles are over but there is a long wait and "mony a weary fit" to travel yet. Now that there is no longer any need for constant attention to my own wants, my nerves relax and all the fatigue of five days' travel seems to come on me at once. I thought I was getting on capitally and would arrive nearly as fresh as when I started, but Nature had only given me extra strength on credit, and now clamoured for payment. I had been using up much more than my own natural powers and had been taking neither rest nor food to make up for the expenditure. The last few hours of my journey were a dragging torment but at last I found myself housed in a long low white bungalow, breathing an Indian atmosphere, being ministered to by strange servants in strikingly foreign garb, but enjoying the warmest of Scotch welcomes in the dear well-known tongue, and trying to realize that I had a summer to rest in an earthly Paradise.



CHAPTER IV.

Awakening in an Earthly Paradise—An Intermittent Breakfast—Meditations of a Modern Baby—Description of a Russian House—The Ikon—Worship of "Idols Dumb"—Siesta—Noonday Slumbers Disagree with the Pilgrim—She is not Encouraged to Improve her Mind—Gives up the Idea of Writing good heavy Book on Russia.



HE morning of my first day in Kieff had far advanced before I opened my eyes to look through the open windows upon the brilliant sunshine, and wonder lazily by what form of enchantment I had been translated to a scene of oriental beauty. I tried to account, in a hazy way, for the waving trees and the confusion of tall shrubs outside, and the never before-experienced warmth and fragrance of the air within my strange quarters.

The hum and rattle of the train were still buzzing in my head to confuse my thoughts, and I had to think a while before realizing that I had indeed reached the end of my journey, and would not

presently be called upon to rise and defend myself from being carried to some unknown part of the world.

I was soon thoroughly awakened to the pleasant truth by the familiar tones of my sister's voice, though uttering strange sounds and being answered in a guttural unknown tongue and, before I was aware that anyone had entered the room, a picturesque peasant girl, bare-footed, and dressed in scanty but brilliant attire, was at my bedside, smiling and gesticulating, and saying something in the tongue I had overheard outside. She was only endeavouring to intimate to the "Barishna"* that breakfast was waiting, but for any meaning conveyed to me, she might have been asking whether I wished to be whisked off to some other scene of enchantment on a magic carpet, or served with an exquisite repast by slavish genii, so well did her figure fit into the dreamy Arabian-nightishness of my sensations. We had breakfast on the verandah, under a festoon of trailing wild vines; a breakfast taken in snatches, most of my attention being given to talking of home or observing the doings of the entirely new and original baby. This was varied by a run down to the garden wall to see some real pilgrims pass on their way to the monastery, or a hurried excursion to the front of the house to ascertain the meaning of a burst of discordant sounds that occasionally broke forth in that direction, and made me

* Barin, Barina, and Barishna. These titles are applied to all superiors by servants and others of the same status. Excellencies and Most Highs are freely lavished on official dignatories.

fancy that something dreadful in the way of Russian atrocity was going on there. I found out that the sounds were intended to be melodious, and that nothing more atrocious was being perpetrated than the murder of national melodies by Russian workmen. A house is being erected close by, and the workmen sing (?) all day. One man in particular keeps up a continuous yelling except when engaged in eating or sleeping, and the others join in as they feel inclined, each one according to his own ideas of time and tune. This must get monotonous after a while. The Barina, who has been favoured with a repetition of a very small repertoire of such concerted pieces every day for weeks, seems to have lost all interest in native music.

"I used to have hopes," she says, "that the man who shrieks like an over-driven locomotive would have an accident and break his voice or something. The noise would stop so suddenly sometimes that the baby woke up and I thought, perhaps the silver-toned tenor had fallen down and killed himself, and would thank goodness and go round to see, but he was always either sitting on the scaffolding, swinging his legs and eating chornee chlab,* or doubled up in a shady corner fast asleep. Nothing ever happens to people of that sort."

We were content with a very restricted programme for the first day, each of us had so much to tell and so much to ask questions about. Then the original baby demanded a great deal of atten-

* Black bread.

tion. The heat of the weather made everything but the lightest and loosest covering intolerable to him, but his mother insisted on his wearing something, principally, I think, because a lot of nice clothes had been provided for him and he had to wear some of them, no matter how the climate behaved itself. His own ideas of clothing did not run to anything extravagant, including only a rattle with a rubber chewing attachment for solid comfort, and one sock, tolerated not so much for style, or by way of recognition of the laws of genteel society, but simply because he could not kick it off as he did the rest of his wardrobe, when left to his own devices for a brief period.

This infant was the only inmate of the bungalow who received me with perfect coolness and self-composure, making no more of me than if I had just dropped in from the next door but one, instead of being a distinguished traveller, with the claims of blood-relationship to consider as well. He said nothing but "goo" to anybody, being still in the monthlets of a dawning existence; but his experience as the child of a much-visited house had opened his mind, and a great deal might be read from his looks. "Just another of those tiresome women," he seemed to be thinking, when I was introduced and left to watch him for a little. "I can't be expected to be a dab at figures, but I should say *you* make the total about three hundred and seventeen. You're going to say a 'malchik'* has no right to *such* lovely eyes, and that I ought to

* Little boy.

be a 'Barishna' with *such* a peachy complexion and *such* a rosebud of a mouth. Rattles and rusks, here's a compliment to a British boy! Every lady trots out that insult as if it were something fresh. They have said that in hashed English, and minced Russian, and chopped German, and broken French, but they've all said the same, and now you're going to turn it into Scotch. I see it in your eye! Go on, *do*, and have it over!" and the young gentleman makes a lunge at me with his foot and kicks off a sock.

I am conscious of having had some such flatterments ready but restrain myself, and my over-visited nephew takes another chew on his rubber and resumes his meditations with sidelong glances expressive of contempt.

"You've got to say my nose is just like mamma's, mind that! You know I have *no* nose worth mentioning, but you all tell the same fib! It's sickening to have to lie here and listen to you. Then you must say the rest of my countenance is the very image of my dear papa's—*that* can't be left out, though you know well enough my face is just as much like an apple dumpling as anything! Yah! that's what an only baby has to put up with!" and the son and heir squirms himself half out of his gown and, finding that I dare not attempt coercive measures, avails himself of the absence of constituted authority to indulge in a regular kick-up among the sofa cushions. Before his "nyannia"* returns he has reduced his clothing to a pink ribbon and a

* Nurse.

string, and signalizes the feat with a crow of triumph.

. . . . . .

Breakfast over, we make a tour of the house and its attachments and, as it is quite Russian in design though English in its adornments, I may as well say a word or two about it. Outwardly it is a long white wooden building of one story, with a verandah at one end on which the drawing-room windows open. Trees and shrubs wave over and embower it with tropical luxuriance. Inside, starting from the salon or drawing-room, any other room of the house may be reached through folding doors concealed by hanging draperies.

Every room has at least two doors and the circuit of the house can thus be made without making use of the corridor, and one can leave the drawing-room without using the main entrance through which visitors are ushered. This is a very good arrangement in a house where visitors are many. It allows one to vanish at a moment's notice if the approach of callers finds one unprepared for company, and to go from home with great despatch if a peep through the curtains reveals a hopeless bore.

Our house is, of course, furnished in English style, so far as English fittings lend themselves to Russian environments; the desire to make the house a home, and not merely an eating and sleeping-place shows itself in everything. Anglo-Russians visiting here for the first time stand stock-still at the drawing-room door and exclaim "How lovely! how English!" as if there were something very

remarkable in Britons carrying their notions of home-life abroad with them. It is not to be wondered at however, that this pretty room should be admired by those used to Russian ways. There is no attempt at such adornment in Russian houses, as a rule.

Their reception-room is a long plain salon with no taste at all in its arrangements, nor even an attempt to spread plain comfort over the whole apartment. It is bare and unfurnished unless at the upper end, where the furniture is grouped together to form a sort of boudoir with couches and easy chairs for the ladies to lounge and smoke on, while passing their tediously idle hours over French novels or gossip. As for the rest of the long room, the walls are innocent of ornament and the chairs are set stiffly against them on the painted floor. But then a Russian house is only a *house*, not a home.

The kitchen is separated from the main building so that the heat and smell of cooking may not be felt in the rooms. Our kitchen is furnished after the Russian style—that is, with extreme simplicity. A large built stove is the principal piece of furniture. It serves for cooking purposes during the day and in winter the servants sleep on top of it.

A strange object surrounded by curtains in one corner of the kitchen excited my curiosity, but I was cautioned to see it without looking at it, as this was the private shrine of the domestics and contained the Ikon or image of their particular Saint. All

peasants' houses are provided with one of these and to it their religious exercises are all directed. A lamp, a simple old-fashioned cruze with a swimming wick, is lit before the Ikon on the days set aside for honouring the Saint represented. On every occasion calling for saintly protection or the particular notice of the Deity, a candle is lit before the image. A thunderstorm, a case of sickness, or a threatened calamity of any kind calls for a candle, and a tallowy pleader is set up to weep greasy tears for the backslidings of the sinner. If this does not melt the heart of the Saint, another glimmering short-six is started. In this way prayers are offered, and promises of better conduct for the future are made, and if the trouble still remains unaffected, more candles are forthcoming.

The devotee goes about his duties or his sins just as usual, however. He has a sincere faith in his pillars of fat, and leans back on his special pleaders with perfect confidence.

Russians profess to worship God, but the Ikon is the real object of their adoration. They prostrate themselves before it morning and evening, and bow and cross with humble reverence every time they pass the shrine. This duty attended to, fasts kept and holidays* observed, their religious obligations are supposed to be satisfactorily performed, and the ignorant masses consider themselves quite free to indulge in any kind of wickedness they may have a mind for, so far as spiritual law is concerned. Very sad, isn't it, my Presbyterian friends? *We* could

* There are about one hundred and eighty holidays in a year.

never be deluded into such empty beliefs. Oh no! We could not spare the holidays in our eager race for wealth, or struggle for existence. Besides, every six candles would "*bang saxpence.*"

The sun had reached the meridian by the time I had seen through all the corners of the bungalow, and the heat had become so great that moving about was a severe physical task. It was the hour of rest, and peace reigned within and without the house. The workmen outside had despatched their meal of brown bread and cucumber, and were now in the enjoyment of the siesta. There was a hush over everything and, feeling the drowsy influences of the burning sun and stifling air, we sought the shadiest part of the garden and the cover of a great drooping acacia, where our conversation soon became disconnected and indistinct. After several attempts to sustain one side of a gaspy and incoherent dialogue, I lost consciousness altogether and drifted into a confused muddle of dreams, in which all I had seen and heard was jumbled in a most distressing way. I had arrived at a desperate stage in my visionary troubles. Hordes of unclean pilgrims and vengeful railway guards were holding me down before the kitchen shrine in which the contemptuous baby had usurped the place of the Ikon, and a crowd of yelling Russian workmen were calling upon me to renounce my own religious convictions, or suffer some yet-to-be-revealed—but horrible—torment, when a hearty shake brought me to my senses and the Barina remarked,—

"When you are done gasping and choking, my

dear, we'll have some lunch. It is very evident you are not used to this sort of life. You are expected to enjoy a siesta in a peaceable way, not to struggle and squeal like the proverbial unclean animal in a fit."

"If siestas are all like that one," I replied, rubbing my eyes, "I shall decline to take any more,



thank you. A common, ordinary, Rider-Haggard-nightmare is good enough for me."

Those workmen were responsible for the most of the trouble, I suppose. They were in full scream again, and the world in general had wakened up.

I should have liked to improve the shining hour after luncheon and added some notes on things of

interest to my collection, while the subjects of special importance which I wished to learn about were still fresh in my memory.

"Of course," I began, having got the Barina cornered in the verandah with the table between her and escape, "you know all about the Nihilists?"

"Oh, certainly. The home papers tell us lots about them; you can look it up. Don't you think bead trimming would look sweet——"

"Pooh! I ask for mental nourishment, and you give me bead trimming. I want to know the facts about the Nihilists, all about the dissatisfied students and the afflicted peasants, and so on, you know."

"I *don't* know. We get all our knowledge from the home papers. There is no trouble here that I know of."

"That's very strange! Well, what about the Jews? You *must* know about the Jews!"

"Oh yes, of course! I see plenty of Jews, or at least, plenty of dirt and quantities of Jew carrying it about."

"Well, what are the real facts concerning the Jewish question?"

"Eh! the real fa— hush! was that the baby?"

"No, it wasn't the baby. I'm afraid you are just the old thing yet, B——. You never *would* study seriously. Now, I want to improve my mind, and don't know the language, and you who do—you *do* know the Russian language, don't you?"

"I should think so!" rejoins the cornered one with an injured stare; "but the people hereabouts don't, or else they won't take the trouble to under-

stand, and keep giving me things I never asked for and doing things I don't want them to do. They are such a lazy careless sort of folk—I'm sure I heard the baby."

"You didn't!" I said with another glance at the note-book. "How about Siberia?"

"Siberia, I believe, is as well as could be expected; anyhow it is in the geography and there is one in the bookcase if you haven't enough of that sort of thing at home. Let me out! I want a shape for this sleeve and it is of more importance than all your burning questions put together. We don't trouble ourselves about such nonsense."

"But I want to know."

"Well, I can't tell you! Read the *Times*, or 'ask a pleecman,' as *Punch* says—ha! that certainly *is* the baby. Let me away to my precious infant!"

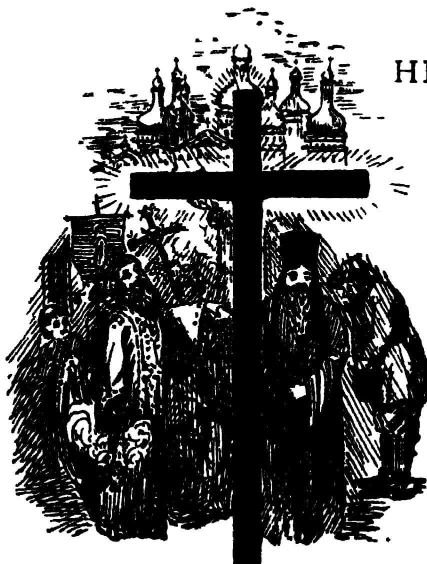
I shut up the note-book with a sigh and never opened it again with a view to entering solid information under separate heads.

This explains the discursive character of the following pages. I expected my friends to know a great deal more than printed authorities at home, but find that the printed authorities are far ahead, and not only know what happens here, but have minute information about many things that never happen at all.



CHAPTER V.

Visit to the Lavra—The Mecca of Passionate Christian Pilgrims—Service in the Church—A Gorgeous Scene—Enthralling Ritual—Bad Manners of a Priest—Blessing the Pilgrims' Food—The Catacombs—Living Corpses—Some really good Lying—The Washing and Ironing of the Saints—The Pilgrim Declines to Believe in the Beatified Parties—Hermits—The Cells of the Monks—The Treasure Chamber—Gems by Grocers' Weight—A Surly Priest—Undevout Conduct of the Pilgrim—Jealousy of Natives—Descent to Material Wants—Home to Russian Breakfast.



THE Pecherskoi Monastery or Lavra, to which religious pilgrims from every part of Russia are attracted in hundreds of thousands every year, is also the greatest attraction in Kieff for pilgrims who go up and down on the earth merely to gather knowledge and enjoy themselves.

We were a mixed party of seven—two Russians

and five English—who had arranged to visit the holy place and before nine o'clock on a Saturday morning we had a glass of Russian tea and set off.

After a very pleasant drive we reached the Lavra and, had we been devout pilgrims, would have prostrated ourselves at the very entrance. Many pilgrims, who had just arrived, were so engaged, and others, who had gone through this preliminary, were reverently kissing the pictures of Theodosius (the founder of the church), and Athanasius, which, surrounded by adoring saints, are painted on the walls of the entrance. A great number of pilgrims, not yet arisen from their night's rest, lay huddled in groups or scattered singly in all directions, their gaudy dresses making bright spots everywhere. They had no bed but the hard ground and their own bundles formed their pillows. Our arrival was well timed for a service was going on when we entered the church. How can I describe the first impression of that magnificent and awe-inspiring scene? The gorgeous silver altar blazing with precious stones, the vessels of gold and silver, the rich vestments of the priests, flashing and multiplying the light of the candles, all blended into a spectacle too dazzling to allow the eyes to distinguish objects clearly.

I dare not venture a description. Such sights must be seen to be appreciated.

As our eyes become accustomed to the display, our ears are attracted by the continuous chanting of the Psalms of David by a young priest. As he chants, the assembled multitude—old men and young

with clothes in every stage of dilapidation—aged women and young maidens with every hue and style of garments—cross themselves and bow down, often to the very ground, in the excess of devotion.

"Gospodee pomeelee! Gospodee pomeelee!"* The choir takes up the refrain, the rich bass voices predominating and filling the whole building with music, rising and falling like the swell of a grand organ. Ever and anon I felt a gentle tap on the shoulder, and on turning round, a few candles† are handed me to be passed forward to the priest, who immediately lights those just offered, and leaves them burning before the altar. These were the prayers of the faithful in tangible form.

Sympathetic emotion thrilled through my whole being as the service went on, and I felt that I should soon be swaying and crossing with the best of them.

Just then a higher priest came from behind the altar and wafted incense all around before taking up his station on a centre dais. There he began to chant in rich mellow tones, an unseen choir behind the altar softly repeated the Psalm, the crowd swayed up and down, more and more, the choir in the church continuing the chant until my charmed soul seemed ready to take flight from its earthly tabernacle.

I do not know to what extent my easily-impressed

* "God save us! God save us!"

† The candles are allowed to burn about five minutes, and are then swept into a pail to make room for more.

feelings might have been wrought up by this truly overpowering service, or how long my nerves might have borne the intense strain induced by the sensuous ritual, had not the solemn priest himself broken the spell and precipitated me down to the common-place world again with a sudden shock.

During a moment's pause in the chant, this holy man of dignified presence and enthralling voice turned his head, coolly expectorated on the rich crimson covering of the daïs, and went on with his chanting again as if he had been guilty of nothing unseemly. "The beast," muttered one of my English friends, who had been as much impressed as myself, "he is only a dressed-up cowboy after all."

The spell once broken, every feature of the service revealed itself in quite a different light, and many ridiculous incongruities became noticeable, that a more artfully sustained pretension might have hid from the eyes of the indifferent or even unbelieving onlooker. The first impression destroyed, the whole worship was seen to be a voluptuous appeal to the senses, and every action of the priests a slovenly performance of certain tabulated rites.

As regards ritualistic formality, the same might, of course, be said of certain forms of religious observance at home, but in these there is at least the appearance of sincerity on the part of the ministers, and no exception can ever be taken to their personal conduct. Here the observances are wholly superficial, and the priests go about their

"business" of driving the machinery of religion with a gross indifference and carelessness of appearances. Their office is holy, they can do no evil; they are unapproachable by the people, who hold them too much in awe to rub shoulders, or even to walk on the same path with them, within the confines of the Lavra.

They put on righteousness with the gorgeous vestments, and if the common animal is not hidden thereby from intelligent eyes, their ways are seldom noted by censorious observers.

While this service was proceeding in the centre of the church, the blessing of the bread was going on in a distant corner. A priest gathers up the bundles, (the food to be blessed is all tied up in handkerchiefs) disappears behind the altar, and returns them, scented with a perceptible aroma of rose water.

Our party now went onwards to view the catacombs. We were each provided with a candle to light the way, and we passed into the vaults below in single file. One of our Russian friends could speak English well, and described everything fully to us. It was a most "gruesome" experience. Every few steps brought us to a niche in the narrow underground passage, in which was laid the real or counterfeited body of a departed saint in an open coffin, and the flickering, uncertain light fell upon the upturned face of the dead and revealed the gaudy mockery of costly robes and glittering ornaments.

The first one our attention was called to was

Theodosius, the founder of the monastery. He is a genuine corpse, we were assured. That fact hurried us onwards with faster steps, and we came to a man not buried at all. The greater part of his body was underground, but his arms, shoulders, and head are still alive, and have been so since about the year 400 after Christ. "It is said," commented our Russian friend, "that he was so good a man that he is never to die, but that he is gradually to sink until the earth covers his head, and then the end of the world will come. 'But *it is all one lie*,'" added our friend, whose religious beliefs seemed to sit lightly upon him. We came to another niche. "And *now*," quoth our cicerone, "*I am going to tell you another lie*. Here lies a prince who did nothing all his life but dig graves for those who needed them, in order to make himself meek and humble."

And thus it was with the whole of the others. Each one had a history more or less difficult for the doubter to swallow. We were all doubters; we had not a grain of salt among us, so we took the liberty of disbelieving the whole budget of sacred fibs. I was told rather a good story about these catacombs. A lady from Moscow was visiting the Lavra the day previous to us, and she happened to say something to her guide about the catacombs of Rome. The priest caught up the word *Rome* at once, and said, with great disdain, "In Rome you only see *mummies*—embalmed bodies—but here we have the real saints' immortal bodies—saints whose godly lives gained them the privilege of never dying."

In thinking over her visit afterwards, it struck the lady to wonder why the velvet wrappings, &c., looked so fresh, and on meeting her guide again she mentioned the matter to him. He laughed immoderately, and told her that once he had occasion to visit the monastery before Easter, a time when all Russia goes on the rampage in the cleaning way. After the winter's rain and snow, the catacombs are very damp and mouldy, and the monks were having a thorough spring cleaning and airing. The linen shrouds and the velvet palls were hanging on the clothes-line to dry (fancy a saints' washing hanging out to dry!): the coffins were standing on end, and all the bodies (?) lying about anyhow.

I suppose each saint gets a new sleeve to his coat when required, and undergoes general repairs every season, just like us poor mortals.

For fifty years two devotees have lived in these catacombs, seeing neither the light of day nor the face of man. They hold no communication whatever with their fellow-creatures; the hard stone is their couch, and their food the smallest portion of meagre fare that will sustain life. One of them has so far subdued his appetite that he actually subsists on one piece of bread and a vessel of water a week, which temperate refreshment is passed into his underground cell through a small opening. By this life of fasting and prayer they hope to rank among the future saints of the Lavra.

On leaving the catacombs we came out into a covered piazza, on the walls of which are painted

several magnificent pictures—one "The Resurrection," and another "The Temptations." Our Russian friend laughingly made us observe how all on the right hand of the throne were long-haired,* full-bearded Russians, and that the Great Judge himself was in Russian costume, while those in all the tortures of everlasting fire were *Jews*.

In the companion picture the different temptations of Sloth, Avarice, Gluttony, Drunkenness, &c., were vividly portrayed. There was also a fearful picture of Dives in the midst of flames, touching his parched tongue, and looking pleadingly upwards.

Passing onwards and upwards we came into another open court, on either side of which were chapels, and along one end of this court were ranged the monks' cells. The very sight of them was enough to make one long to turn monk at once. Fancy an attractive row of the prettiest white houses you ever saw, with wide open doors, and lovely trees waving in front of them. Not much sign of penance and mortification of the flesh here. These monks live on the best of everything, and drive about in the most comfortable of carriages.

We had abundance of time to observe everything as we sat on a bench waiting for our Russian friend to find some one in authority with whom he was acquainted, to allow us the unusual favour of visit-

* All Russian peasants, men and women alike, wear their hair long, and parted straight down the middle, in imitation of the pictures of Christ.

ing the treasure room of the monastery, with all its riches of precious stones and presentation vestments. A heavily-bolted iron door had to be opened ere we entered. Three young priests accompanied the higher official who unlocked the doors of the various cases.

First we were shown the different vestments presented to the priests by various emperors. Their magnificence beggars description. Richest cloths, studded with the most precious diamonds, gorgeous crosses, sparkling crowns, golden wine cups, silver oil vessels, dazzled our eyes. One of these crowns contained $5\frac{3}{4}$ pounds of the finest pearls. Perhaps Mr. Streeter could give the money value of that. Another was adorned with 36 pounds' weight of the same stones, but of imperfect purity; it was not therefore exhibited as an object for very particular notice.

Looking on this display of wealth, it is not to be wondered at that this one monastery alone was able to give 1,000,000 roubles loan to the Government during the Crimean War. Nor need any one be surprised that the monastery suffers not, though the money has never been repaid.

"I will tell you a little story about this," said the Russian gentleman. "When the son of the Czar who borrowed these roubles visited the monastery after his father's death, the receipt—the I.O.U. as you call it—for the debt was presented to him on a rich silver salver. He took it up, looked at it carefully, and coolly said: 'Yes; that is a very precious paper, as it has the signature

of a very illustrious person. Guard it jealously as one of your priceless souvenirs.'"

The priest in authority did not endeavour to hide his unwillingness to exhibit the sacred treasures to our profane eyes; perhaps the presence of ladies in the company made him more grumpy than he would otherwise have been, as women are rigourously kept at a distance in religious matters, and none may, on any pretext, pass within the veil. His three assistants each came in for a share of his ill-humour, and were soundly rated in strong Russe for any careless slip they happened to make. The vestments are kept in large presses fixed up round the walls of the apartment. Each robe is carefully covered with a cashmere shawl, and is hung on a sort of a clothes-horse, which swings outwards on hinges.

One of the under priests slammed a horse back into its place after the robe had been exhibited, instead of reverently replacing it, and got what we would call a "regular wigging" from his crusty superior for it. I was standing very close to the defaulter, and as he turned hastily to uncover another robe, his flowing hair and beard swept across my face. I could not repress an involuntary shudder, and passed my handkerchief over my face to get rid of the ticklish feeling. As I did so, I happened to look in the direction of the other two priests—who were stationed, one in the middle of the room, and the other at the door, lest we should try to run away with anything—and noticed that both of those gentlemen were

regarding me with saucer - eyed astonishment. Probably had the accident happened to a devout Russian woman, the favoured one would never have washed her face any more.

The priest at the door came in for the next scolding, for allowing some other visitors to crush past him, and get a glimpse of the valuables; after which his reverence gave our Russian friend a large piece of his mind, for being the prime cause of all the trouble.

I learned afterwards that the unwonted favour extended to us had caused much jealousy among Russians, who thought they had a better right to view the treasures than we had, but could not gain admittance to the chamber.

We came round again by the church as the concluding chant was being sung, and just in time to see the "Assumption" of Mary the Mother of Christ, descending. This is of gold, and shaped like an old battle-shield. On it are the figures of Christ, with a crown of diamonds like a halo round His head, the dying Mary, and several others. It is said that this heavy piece of gold came straight down from heaven to this monastery. They symbolize the miraculous occurrence by daily letting it slowly descend from the top of the altar to the ground. "All this is needed to impress the common people, who are very ignorant, and cannot read for themselves," said our guide; "but you must not suppose *we* are so stupid as to be deceived. Educated people all know well enough that it is nothing but lies and nonsense."

We all drove home again to a regular Russian breakfast at noon. First came "Zakuska," the appetite-provoking first course. It consisted of raw herring with cucumber, raw bear-ham, caviar, dried mackerel, sausage, bread, butter and vodka.* Then came the solid meal of hot meats and fowls, with all sorts of wine, and lastly, coffee. During the meal our Russian friend remarked that he had seen us smile every time he said, "That is another lie," and asked if it were not proper to put it so in English. We told him that we should most likely put it a little more euphoniously, and then asked in return if we might in Russia call anyone straight out "a liar." First he said "No," and then "Yes, you may, but hold yourself firm, else you will get knocked down."

Then our gentlemen wanted to know what they *could* say in Russia if they meant to let a man know they did not believe him ; but they were told they should just think it, and not say it. This same gentleman amused us greatly by declaring you had just to know five words of English to get along in Britain, *i.e.*, "mutton chops," "sixpence," and "all right."

The first is the very best thing you can get in any hotel ; the second is what you pay, and if one sixpence is not enough you just keep on giving ; the last answers for every occasion.

A travelled and cultivated Russian gentleman is a pleasant and valuable acquaintance. We have to thank this one for much in the way of guidance and

* Corn brandy.

information and also for some very tangible remembrances of our visit, in the shape of pictures, &c. He, too, seemed to enjoy himself greatly in English company, and the party broke up for the day with expressions of pleasure and good-will all round.



CHAPTER VI.

Tropical Heat—Walking Impossible—Droschky Driving—The Eesvoshtcheek—English People in Kieff—About Money—Off to a Supper Garden—Crossing the Dnieper by Moonlight—Doubtful Character of the Gardens—Lady Smokers—Latest Fashions—No Old Maids—Russian Courtship and Marriage—A Bride who would not Sell—Our Ideas of Patriarchal System a Mistake—Woman's Rule—Home—A Barring Out.



SIGHT-SEEING under a sun like that which rules the summer-day in Southern Russia is a task to be undertaken with deliberation. To understand what fatigue really means one has only to attempt the process in British fashion and walk somewhere.

After the experience, the passionless traveller comes to understand why even a religious pilgrim, actuated by holy passion, should expect to be re-

warded by indulgence and forgiveness of sin for undertaking a pilgrimage to Kieff.

With the thermometer at 110°, the desire for healthy exercise wanes; and after a brief struggle to keep up the habitual observances we have been taught to look upon as essential to useful existence, we give in to the general *dolce far niente*, and carry the art of doing nothing to a state of perfection scarcely possible in our cool climate.

I did not give in just at first. On my first excursion down town I thought it foolish to call a droschky at the street corner, as everybody here does, and protested against driving as a weak indulgence unworthy of a Briton. Before I was half-way down I found myself feebly repenting my vain display of strong-minded principle, and by the time I had to face the ascent of the hill on the way homeward, I had relinquished all my thorough-going beliefs in salutary movement, and have ever since been content to degenerate with the rest of the population, and drive everywhere. Everybody rides, rich, middle-class, and poor. The droschky is always at hand, and competition is so great that one can be hired for a few copecks. A bargain is always made at the start by those who are used to Russian ways. I could not haggle, but always knew when I had overpaid the "eesvoshtcheek"* by the strength and quantity of his expressions of gratitude.

If he had received a fair recompense he said,

* Driver.

"Blagodoroo Barishna."* If a penny too much, he added another "Blagodoroo." Ten copecks overplus brought him off his perch to make a humble salaam, and fifteen† produced an abject grovel, with an inclination to knock his head on the ground. A lady who could part with sixpence without squabbling for half an hour about it *must* be a very high and mighty personage indeed. The natives beat each other down to the uttermost fraction in everything, and will squabble a quarter of an hour over a single copeck. Time is not money with them, and the peasant who means to have a drive for 1½d. will interview perhaps a dozen droschky men, who decline to come lower than 2d., call them all cheats and robbers, shout, gesticulate, and swear himself into an apparently dangerous state of excitement. Then, on the appearance of a thirteenth "eesvoshtcheek," who accepts his offer, he takes his seat as calmly as if no ripple had ever disturbed the placid surface of his temper.

The droschsky is never far away; the London whistle is unknown, but a scream of "Eeshvoosht! Eeshvoosht!" brings half a dozen from as many different directions, racing, full tilt, to secure the fare. Two words (added to the mighty power of the British umbrella) were enough to take one about, after the names of the principal streets were mâstered. "Instituteski skoroe" meant "along Instituteski, drive fast"; "stoy" was the order to

* "Thank you, Miss." The Russian words are given here as they sound.

† Fifteen copecks (3*d*) was considered enough for a mile or so.

stop. Generalities as to unknown streets were made by graceful sweeps of the umbrella, and protests driven into the small of the "eesvoshcheek's" back with the point thereof.

The droschky is not very comfortable, and generally supposed by foreigners to be difficult to sit in; but this becomes easy by practice, especially when a lady and gentleman agree to acquire proficiency together. The universal custom provides a support for the lady in the arm of the gentleman.

. . . . . .

There are very few fixed English residents in Kieff, but our country is always fairly represented by a floating population of travellers, military officers, commercial gentlemen, and governesses, most of whom I met. British reserve gives way to the desire for social intercourse in a strange country, and the Russian distrust of all foreigners places the strangers very much in the same position as if if they were thrown together on an uninhabited island.

The military officers come from Indian stations to study the language, and, for the sake of learning the pronunciation, board with Russian households, where there is no social enjoyment suitable to English tastes. They were frequent visitors at the bungalow, and our companions in many sight-seeing excursions. Very pleasant company they were, full of entertaining information regarding Indian ways, as well as stories of Indian life and adventure. Conversation with such visitors opened my eyes a little to a question which, I suppose, few

women study, and none will ever fully understand. A two-shilling piece is always two shillings to us at home, but here it may be one-and-fourpence, or eighteen-pence, or half-a-crown. I do not understand "money" myself, further than that it is a very comfortable thing to have, and that an empty purse is man's greatest enemy. I could not master the reasons why "Exchange"—generally supposed to be "no robbery"—should, under certain circumstances, become downright swindling.

Imagine a debtor being able to say, "I owe you five shillings. Will you take a paper note for the full amount, or three-and-elevenpence three-farthings in cash? It is all the same to me."

What an absurdity! and yet that is just the state of matters here, so far as I can judge.

It might happen, of course, that the creditor would have it in his power to say, "*You* owe *me* five shillings. I'll trouble you for seven-and-six-pence halfpenny, if you please."

We spent many evenings at home, in the public gardens, and elsewhere, in company with English and English-speaking Russian acquaintances, and, on such occasions I was able to gather much interesting and trustworthy information. In no other way can a traveller, ignorant of the language, gain any idea of life in Russia. Indeed a master of the language, without such opportunities for social intercourse, might go about and learn very little. A person, who is evidently intent on gathering information and making notes, is looked upon with

great suspicion, and may go home with a fine budget of lies and mis-statements.

There are three popular supper gardens. The Mineralli or Mineral Water Establishment, the Chateau, and the New Gardens. They were about equal in attractions, and were attended by great numbers of people.

. . . . . .

"That droschky is ever so much too good for Miss Morris, Captain A——," cried the Barin,* as a party of us were setting out to spend the evening in the New Gardens. "Aunty likes bad ones. This will do for us."

"You are pleased to be sarcastic, Herr Barin," I replied.

"Well, you know that only yesterday you insisted on hiring a horse that was all soul and no body, and a man who was all bones and no conscience."

"Yes, but the man was so ragged, and pleaded so!"

"Well," said Lieutenant B——, "the next one might suit. The horse has only one eye and no tail. The man is unmistakably hearty though."

"Number three is nearer the mark," said Captain A——. "The existence of the whole wretched turn-out seems to depend on two bits of string."

"I suppose that is a joke, Captain A——," said the Barina, "how do you make it out?"

"Easily, Barina. The droschky is a trembling puzzle of rotten sticks tied to the horse, the horse

* Pronounced "Bareen."

is a tottering wreck hanging on to the man, the man is an anatomical curiosity supported by a very stiff coat, which is tied tightly on to him by the two bits of string aforesaid. Ergo! if the strings give way, the coat will cease to support the man, the man will cease to hold up the horse, the horse will cease to keep the droschky together, and the whole concern will collapse in a ruin, more complete than the famous 'one horse shay.' Shall we take it, Barishna?"

"Certainly not, Captain A——," I replied, as soon as I could for laughing. "The strings would be sure to give way before we reached the foot of the hill, and—— what is the man saying?"

"He says (mimicking the driver), 'A poor man, Barishna,—six children and a wife, high-born lady, six children and a wife.'"

"That is a poor lie, Miss Morris," said Lieutenant B——. "The last man I had, had fifteen children and two wives. One wife was dead, but not forgotten, so he counted her in."

"Oh, come along," cried the Barina, "we'll never get there."

"That is a foregone conclusion, if we take this droschky, Barina," replied the Captain. "Barishna, we await judgment."

"Well, he is a very poor man, and it's not fair after keeping him waiting,—I think we'll take him."

"The will of Allah be done," said the Captain, solemnly. "Farewell, my friends; break it gently to my wife, B——, say my last thoughts were of her and the children."

Nothing happened, of course.

If dilapidation in man, horse, and vehicle were looked upon as a dangerous quality, there would be much less droschky driving in Kieff, for curiosities in interesting ruins are plentiful. Our four vehicles bore us safely, though much shaken, to the edge of the Dnieper, where we took ship and crossed to a small island lying begemmed with electric lights in the middle of the moonlit water. The evening was stiflingly hot. The air was heavy with an enervating heat that was new and strange to one used to cool sea breezes. Movement was positively painful, and when we had reached the interior of the gardens we were fit for nothing but to recline on seats, and watch the passing show.

The gardens of Kieff are popular resorts for all classes of people, who drop in for supper, gossip, and recreation, a very trifling charge being made for admission. The scene is very much like that to be met with in the grounds of the London Exhibitions, only, the space is much greater, and the dresses of the ladies much gayer. The warmth of the air allows them to appear in full evening dress, and in many cases even wraps and head coverings are thrown aside.

Splendid orchestras are in attendance at different parts of the garden, and there is also a canvas theatre in the grounds, but we were not taken to see the entertainment. I was told it was suited to Russian tastes, and that was sufficient. Russia has no Mrs. Grundy as yet, and English ladies act wisely in

following their own ways, and not asking too much about those of their neighbours.

Here, as everywhere else, there is doubtless enough beneath the surface to satisfy the curiosity of the person who is always "wanting to know, you



know;" but without a knowledge of the language and customs, people can get pleasure enough in the supper gardens, and enjoy the music and company of their friends without perceiving anything to offend their delicacy.

We had some crayfish by way of appetizer before

supper,—half-a-hundred of these are considered a fair allowance for one person.

I ate two, and they acted very unfairly towards me. This national dainty made me feel as if I had ventured to imitate the Russian ladies around us, who were smoking cigarettes with evident appreciation.

We had a never-failing source of enjoyment in the bright crowd of promenaders, and we were as much observed as observing, for the ever-eager Russian curiosity made the foreigners objects of remark. Although very quietly dressed, the clothes of the ladies of our party were evidently of deep interest to the fair Muscovites.

At St. Petersburg the latest fashions of London and Paris will no doubt make their appearance as soon as at any other European capital, but here everything is about two years behind London. We were, therefore, more conspicuous in butterfly sleeves and 1890 hats than we had any desire to be.

There was no scarcity of feminine comeliness in the assemblage. The ladies had, of course, all the advantage of full toilet and a soft light to enhance their charms, but many of the younger ones were exquisitely beautiful, both in face and figure.

"But the ladies all seem to be either married or decidedly young," I remarked to the British "Consultana," who, with the Vice-Consul, was of our party.

"Yes," she replied, "so they are, my dear; girls have no end or aim in life but to get married."

"But they cannot *all* manage it. What becomes

of the elderly young lady? Do they shut up unmarried women when they reach a certain age, or—horrible thought—do they give them the sack and throw them in the Dnieper?"

"No, no! Barishna!" replied a Russian gentleman, laughing, "we are not so bad as that. The fact is, we are not blessed with single ladies of a sensible age."

"Very nicely put, Mr. Novikoff," said the Consultana. "It is quite true, Miss Morris. The wall-flower is seldom to be seen in society here. If the girl is not attractive enough, her father has only to make her *dot* sufficiently so. Cupid has to gild his arrows in all cases, but in the case of a plain girl the god of Love has to knock a suitor down with a money bag."

"Very nicely put, too," said Mr. Novikoff, with a smile. "But you are severe on us, Madame S——. The custom of the country does not allow us to make love in the English style."

This is the true state of the case. "What to do with our girls" is not a theme for debate in Russia. There is only *one* thing to do with them, and when a girl has reached the age of seventeen, her parents begin to look for a suitable match for her, aiming as high as possible to begin with, but coming down gradually as she gets older, on the principle,—

> "Better be mairit tae something, than no' tæ be mairit ava."

An unmarried young lady of twenty-four is therefore very uncommon.

Here, as in France, marriage is a matter of

arrangement, and there is no "marrying for love and working for siller." The Russian girl marries for liberty, because, until her engagement has been announced, she must not even appear in company with a gentleman.

The engagement is a very formal matter. The admirer—who must belong to the same class as the object of his affections—makes his bargain with the parents of the young lady, and if the accompanying dowry is suitable, cards are sent out bearing the names of the happy (!) pair, with the word "engaged" printed underneath.

The mercenary lover, who has any desire to make love, and is not too much taken up with billiards, or business, or the club, and happens to remember that he *is* engaged when he has an odd minute or two, is then free to call on his sweetheart.

The father of the young lady furnishes the house as well as providing the *dot*, and if he should fail in his part of the transaction, the grasping Daphnis thinks nothing of deserting his Chlöe, and backing out at the last moment.

One such case was brought under my own notice. The father promised the prospective son-in-law ten thousand roubles with his daughter.

The astute young gentleman pressed for the money, and the father said it would be paid on the wedding day. The day arrives, the wedding guests are assembled, and the bride is ready. The bridegroom appears, and demands the money.

Three thousand roubles are paid down, and bills offered for the rest, but the love-sick swain will

have none of the "paper," and actually walks off!

"Any other offer for the goods at terms stated? Three thousand down, and bills for seven thousand, at two, three, and four months?"

"Examine the article for yourselves, gentlemen; a genuine bargain, I assure you, not shoddy. No other offer? Very good then; we can't have a wedding to-day."

The education of the daughters for the matrimonial market gives them an undue importance in the household. They do nothing for themselves; are served hand and foot; and while every care is bestowed on the accomplishments of the girls, the boys are entirely neglected, and left to the freedom of their own very free wills.

Although the arrangement is the same as in France, the Russian girl is not repressed and kept behind the shutter, as I understand the French young girl to be. On the contrary, the Russian young lady, so far as I have been able to judge, is, at an early age, a very cool and self-assertive "young person," with a great deal of "say" in the house.

There is a notion among us that Russian households are conducted on the patriarchal system and ruled by the eldest male member of the family. It is a great mistake. The Russian house is more under the rule of woman than British homes in general.

The mothers and daughters do all the governing, and carry everything in their way, whatever the means taken to secure their ends.

"When my wife says she must have four hundred roubles to go to see her mother in Moscow," said one of our Russian acquaintances, "I know she has to get it. I may refuse, and say I cannot afford it, but she just cries for a day or two, and I have to 'fork up, or stump out,' as you say."

"And do you actually allow Mrs. N—— to cry for a day or two, Mr. N——?" asks the Barina.

"Yes," replied the honest Russian, simply.

"Happy man," said the Barin, ungallantly. "An English woman would cry just ten minutes, and if there were no sign of softening on the hubby's part, she'd begin to smash plates and things."

We decided to walk home after reaching the Kieff shore again; but in spite of the night air, the uphill journey was very fatiguing. The moonlight view of the town made up for the labour, however, and we were almost sorry when our slow steps brought us within view of home. Our party had broken up into straggling twos and threes, and as we neared the house, we could see that the approach to it was entirely blocked up by something we could not make out at a distance.

"There is a row going on," said Lieutenant B——, as the Barin's voice was heard raised in expostulation. "What can have happened?"

We hurried on and found the entrance to the bungalow quite blocked up by bullock carts, the bullocks evidently at rest for the night, and their drivers nowhere to be seen.

"Hullo, A——!" said the Lieutenant, accosting his friend, who was leaning against a cart gazing

disconsolately at the wreck of his hat. "What's up?"

"Up!" replied the Captain. "Nothing's up. English Consuls have come down, and the British Army has been humbled to the dust in the person of yours truly."

"Dear me! What has happened, Captain A——? Where are the others?" asked the Barina.

"The Consul is in the yard trying to find out whether the drivers of those carts are dead or only asleep. The Barin, as you can hear, is giving it to the dvornik. Look at that! What would you call that, ladies?" continued Captain A——, holding out his hat for inspection.

"A concertina?"

"A scrunched bandbox?"

"An old meat can?"

"Not a hat?" we suggested in laughing chorus.

"Yes, ma'am," replied the Captain, replying to the last suggestion. "A hat; a shocking bad hat. The facts are these. We came up and found those carts drawn up before the house and barring all approach to the gate. Getting no response to repeated calls for the dvornik, we scaled the ramparts and boldly dashed forward in search of the skulking enemy; but, betrayed by the shadows, pitched headfirst into a mountain of building-sand instead, and—look at that hat! Is England to be insulted thus? Is Russia to play it off on us this way in times of peace——?"

At this moment a troop of grumbling drivers made their appearance, tumbling about sleepily

amongst the sand, and complaining of their hard treatment in having to turn out at such an hour. The gentlemen followed, and a tremendous disturbance began.

The bullocks at first absolutely refused to stir; but at length, after a great deal of swearing and kicking on the part of the carters, the teams were induced to move, the dvornik made a lane through the sand, and after a hearty "Spokoynee Notch"* all round, we gained our quarters, and sought well-earned repose.

* Good-night.



CHAPTER VII.

Fasts and Feasts—Blessed Apples—St. John the Baptist's Head—A Wilful Woman—Superstitions—A too Ambitious Hen—Superstition in the Nursery—Real Pilgrims—Devotees Described—Working Men—Toiling Women—Soldiers Labouring for Hire—Convict Labour—Russian Cricket—One Insect Defies Four Women—Cricket no Game for Ladies.



IT must be something of a task to keep count of the fasts, feasts and saints' days good Russians are supposed to observe. To-morrow is the end of a fortnight's fast which has something to do with the harvest, something like our thanksgiving feasts reversed, and turned into starvation. It is called the "Blessing of the Apples." Our nurse, who is a very devout person, borrowed some apples from the "Missus," and, after attending the service, brought us two that had been fingered and crossed

by one of those immaculate priests, telling us to eat them and we should ail nothing for a whole year. The Barina ate hers after rubbing and paring until no virtue could possibly be left in it. I put mine in a drawer, where it went bad in two days; and now I shall be catching colds all the winter just as usual.

Another fast was brought under our notice by the visit of a Russian gentleman on the evening of the 29th of August. When supper-time arrived, the visitor had reached a state bordering on the ravenous, and yet could eat nothing within reach because of the barriers—which he religiously respected—placed by the Church in the way of his satisfying his inward cravings. This fast concerned the beheading of John the Baptist, and nothing round in shape or anything cut with a knife, could be eaten, nor could a plate be used. As our supper was mostly composed of round fruit, round biscuits, and Russian tea in round glasses with round slices of lemon floating in it, the poor man had to fall back on a common enough practice at a Russian table, and tear a handful of bread out of an oblong loaf and sigh for twelve o'clock. Happily this fast lasts only one day.

The sufferer told us solemnly of an awful example of impious defiance of the observance, and the swift retribution which overtook the sinner—an example which brought back a vague memory of the fairy-books and made us fancy we had heard something like it before.

The case related was that of a woman—it always *is* a woman who makes trouble of this kind. How tradition ever caught a man gathering sticks on a

Sunday and inhabited the moon with him for it, I can't think; in fact I don't believe it. The man was probably lying comfortably in bed waiting till his wife put the fire on, and when she did not come back with the kindling, he would lie still and grumble, and make rude remarks about the gossiping tendencies of the female sex. Tradition never goes closely into particulars, and is liable to misrepresentation from much telling and faulty typesetting.

The woman referred to by the Russian gentleman was wicked enough to declare she would have cabbage-soup on the fast day, in spite of John the Baptist or the whole calendar of saints, and, going out to the garden, she cut a fine round cabbage. When she returned to the house — Gospodee Pomeelee!—it was her dearest child's head she held in her hand, and the knife was "all bluggy!" Our candid guide to the saints of the Lavra was not of the company that evening, to warn us that this story was "just another whole lie," so we helped the legend down with some tea, and hoped it might not disagree with us.

There is no end to the superstitions of the natives. The other morning the cook sought an audience, and with a very serious countenance proceeded to bring the malevolent doings of a certain "Kooritsa"* before the notice of the ruling authority. It seemed that this misguided bird had taken to vocal gymnastics of an ambitious character, and was not only trying to imitate the cock by day, but carrying her exercises far into the night.

* Hen.

"For this," claimed the cook solemnly, "the Kooritza must die."

"I don't see why it should," said the Barina. "It is one of the best layers we have."

This was admitted; but the hen must be killed all the same, and that immediately, as the kitchen oracle gravely assured us that any "Tchelavyek"* in the house would be constantly ailing until the ill-favoured serenader paid the utmost penalty of the law.

There was no use protesting against such an argument, and five minutes after sentence, a lesson on vanity had been given to the whole barn-yard, and that hen was not.

This superstition seems to be equivalent to one which still lingers with us regarding the midnight howling of a dog. It struck me as a good handy bogie to introduce at home if it could be transplanted. Such a superstition would be welcomed by many people who do not keep hens, but have the misfortune to live near other people who do. I have the sleep-murdering cacklings of one rusty-voiced biped vividly impressed upon the tablets of my memory—one which carried on a long career of error with impunity, simply because we have no such persuasive weapon to raise against the malpractices of obnoxious hens. This bird either could not discriminate between a gas-lamp and a sunrise, or fancied it might with acceptance

"Sing in the shade"

in a land where there are no nightingales. Now if

* Man.

the mistaken persons who keep town fowls could be induced to consign their erring roosters to Nirvana under a dread of influenza or adult measles, a revival of superstition, as applied to practical use, might be looked upon as an advancement instead of a retrogade movement.

The superstitions of the cook are as nothing compared to those of the nurse, who has not only her own person to preserve from the machinations of ever watchful evil spirits, but has to be constantly on the alert to defend her tender charge from their spiteful tricks. The baby must never look in a mirror or see his own shadow. No one must touch him after he is taken out of his bath until the nyannia has kissed him on four different parts of the body to form a cross, and he must not have his portrait taken till he is one year old. His cradle must never be rocked when he is not in it, and an accidental push against it puts the nyannia into a state of great distress. Then she has to spit every time the cat passes, and as the cat is a very sociable animal, which follows us about everywhere in the house and garden, the poor nurse is often kept expectorating to a painful and inelegant extent.

Her self-imposed cares are not over even when the lively young gentleman goes to sleep. She has to cross him if he moan in his slumbers to ward off the invisible. imps, and kiss him if he smile, to induce the good angels to stay.

Increasing heat made staying at home all day a matter of necessity, but I did not need to go beyond

the boundary of the garden wall for entertainment. Pilgrims were arriving daily by hundreds. Poor, ragged, footsore, and weary, but gladdened by the sight of the seven gilded domes of the Lavra, they dragged their heavy limbs along with all the energy they could muster to reach the haven of their desire, and find rest within the monastery. There were old and young, male and female, most of them in tattered garments, and some barefooted. Some were blind, and had others leading them, not with that loving solicitude we love to see extended to those who have lost the blessed sense of sight, but merely allowing the afflicted ones to cling to the hem of their garments. Some had come all the way from Archangel, begging their bread from day to day, and spending perhaps six months on the road. Some carried their long boots slung over their shoulders, and staggered along with swollen feet. In one or two cases whole families might be seen, the women and children dragging behind,—the men pressing onward and never looking back to see if they needed help, and evidently too much absorbed by their own painful condition to care though the weak ones sank down by the way.

All the pilgrims carried on their backs a bag to hold their black bread, appended to which was a bottle containing oil to soften the dry fare. In the left hand they carried a drinking vessel, and in the right a branch broken from a tree and used as a staff. The sheep-skin kaftan or paletot swung from the shoulders, and must have added grievously to their burden in tramping along the hot roads by

day, but was necessary for protection by night, as they slept in the open air.

Once arrived at the monastery the pilgrim may rest three weeks within the walls, the first three days of which he is fed at the expense of the Church.*

Nothing but sincere faith and strong belief could sustain those poor creatures in a task so painful as this. There are, to be sure, rewards in the way of indulgences to be looked forward to, but consider the tremendous distances travelled, many parts of the road being quite uninhabited for miles. Bread must often run short, the burning sun beats pitilessly upon them by day, and occasionally a sudden chill comes on during the night. The pilgrims must be sustained by a strength of conviction and a devotion to what they believe necessary to salvation which might be sought for in vain in the most devoted Christians amongst us.

. . . . . .

The building going on close by was a constant source of amusement on those stay-at-home days, and gave me an opportunity for observing the ways of the Russian working man and woman which I could not otherwise have had.

The men were rough, boorish specimens of humanity, but showed no sign of that cowed, downtrodden demeanour one would naturally expect from reading what has been written about the lower classes of Russia, and contrasting their wretched lot

* As many as 200,000 pilgrims have been numbered in a season. This is double the fixed population of Kieff.

with that of the British workman. The Russian works six long days for five shillings; yet he sings all day, and never seems to think he is being cheated out of a fair share of the good things of the world. In fact he has not reached the thinking stage, and still mechanically bows his back to the burden as meekly as if the collar of serfdom were yet about his neck. The Russian labourers, taken in general, seem to be content. This is, perhaps, the most serious obstacle encountered by those preachers of progress whom the servants of the Government are constantly hounding and persecuting with all the jealous hate of conscious evildoers who fear the spread of knowledge. A man must be awakened to a sense of injustice before he can be expected to rise up and demand his rights, and the mind of the common Russe sleeps in deepest ignorance. The heart of the Propogandist may well sink within him as he looks upon the vacant faces and finds no response to his fierce denunciations of the oppressor. The labourer has his religion full of indulgences for this world, and promises for the next; he has his Czar—"his Father"—who loves him, and would never see him wronged if wicked men did not come between the "Little Father and his children." For the rest he can work outside in summer, and make toys at home in winter. If the times are not too hard, he has bread and vegetables, tobacco and vodka, a roof to cover him, and a stove to sleep on. "What more can a man want?"

Far from grumbling, the humble Russian is light-hearted and cheerful to an enviable extent. He is

generous, and freely shares his frugal fare with a brother whose poverty is greater than his own, and if he have only bread and salt to offer, he gives it with proud hospitality, and would feel insulted by the mention of repayment.

The workman's summer garb is very simple; a shirt thrown loosely over a pair of very wide trousers stuffed into long boots, wrinkled like the bellows of a concertina, and innocent of blacking, and a cap which varies in style, but is always a study in ugliness. Soap and water are luxuries for the rich; washing is not to his taste at all. Give him enough of the coarsest food and drink, a cigarette to smoke, and some sunflower seeds to chew between meals, and he is happy.

A number of women arrived one day and began to make preparations for plastering the outside of the house. They were as coarse as the men, and had to work even harder, as they had no trowels to lay the plaster on with.

The women brought the various ingredients in sacks on their shoulders, mixed a coarse mess for the first application, carried it up the ladders, and lifting it in handfuls, threw it on the wall and smoothed it down with their hands! (Ye dainty-fingered daughters of Britain, think of it!) Into this first coating they stuck little pegs of wood at small distances apart, and proceeded to apply a finer coat of plaster over all in the same way as the first. The use of the pegs was then apparent; they gave a rough dotted impression to the smooth surface,

which, after a whitewash had been applied, had quite an artistic effect.

What would our woman's rights advocates, who find so much to clamour for in *our* system, think about a spectacle like this? The fact of women being so employed is deplorable enough, but the moral depravity plainly exhibited by those women was more saddening still. Womanly modesty, as we understand the meaning of the term, is an almost unknown quality in Russia among high and low, but in the working-class, modesty has not attained even the rudiment of a meaning.

I was very much surprised when a party of soldiers came to work as labourers on this building, but more so when a batch of prisoners arrived to hasten on the work.

The soldiers are allowed to hire themselves out, and, in fact, must find some means of adding to their pay, which is not sufficient to procure food. This accounts for the slovenly appearance of many of the country's defenders. How would this suit you, Mr. Atkins? to carry a hod up and down a ladder from six o'clock in the morning to eight at night, instead of bearing a little cane along the street, or directing the manœuvres of a perambulator, with nurse-maid attachment, in the Park? I am afraid you would grumble, Thomas; I really do not believe you would like Russian ways at all.

The prisoners are hired out by the day to who ever applies for them. It is common for householders moving from one house to another to engage a number of men undergoing punishment for minor

offences. They are sent under care of an officer, do the work carefully, break nothing, and are charged for at the rate of twenty-two copecks (fourpence-halfpenny) a day; a part of their earnings being set aside and handed over to them on the expiry of their sentences. I should never have known the difference between bond and free but for the presence of two guards with muskets in the yard outside. The prisoners ate, slept, and chattered with the same freedom as the others, and no doubt found the work an agreeable relief to prison life.

While writing the above notes on the verandah, I had become aware of an unusual disturbance indoors, and was on the point of going in to find a reason, when the Barina with a very red face and a generally flustered air suddenly appeared at a window.

"Ho! thou inky-fingered one!" cried she; "come and have a game of cricket; you've been writing a deal too long."

"Cricket, my dear girl! Whoever heard of such a thing under a sun like this?—besides I can't play."

"No fear of that. I'll show you how. We've been practising for the last twenty minutes, and want another fielder; come in and help."

Suspecting some sort of hoax, I went into the sitting-room, and found the whole domestic establishment in a state of overheated excitement. Armed with sticks or brooms, they were grouped round one of the doorways of the sitting-room, which seemed to be the centre of operations.

"Now then," said the Barina, handing me a nobby stick, "this is the game. The cricket is in the door curtain; we've chased him there from the nursery and tied him in. Sasha is going to poke him out, then we all try to hit him, and the one who knocks his head off gets five copecks and a mother's blessing."

"B.," I said, severely, "do you mean to say this rumpus is all about *a* cricket—*one* poor miserable insect?"

"Insect!" cried B.; "wait till you see him. You'll want to jump on a chair, and tie your gown round your ankles."

"But I *have* seen one—one?—I've had them chirping round me in dozens. When I was in Leeds——"

"Leeds! pooh! those were English crickets, not worth mentioning. This is a Russian cricket, and he doesn't chirp, he barks, he sneezes, he coughs. I think he caught cold when the floor was washed."

"Not much wonder; the poor creature won't be used to cleanliness, being Russian."

"Well, he shall cough no more here. The baby couldn't get a wink of sleep all night. Poke him up, Sasha!"

Sasha carefully untied the curtain and gave it a good shake.

A large whitey-brown something jumped out with a loud chirrup, and alighted on the bare foot of the cook, who screamed "chort!"* and jumped nearly two feet in the air.

* "The devil!" Such expressions are more common in Russia than slang words among us.

"Masha!" said the Barina, reprovingly, "I have repeatedly told you you must not swear——"

"But, Barina," began the cook, with the everlasting shrug, and out-spread palms—"the crick——"

"There he goes!" cried B., as the monster hopped merrily across the floor. Four weapons came down with a thwack on the spot where the cricket should have been, but wasn't.

"Chirrup! chirrr-rup!" Four more fruitless blows!

Chirrup! chirrr-rup! "Now he's on the sofa! No, he's over the back! Poke him out. Don't smash the furniture!"—chirrup! "There he goes!" —chir—"on the table!"—rup! chirrup! "Now we have him!—altogether!" and the weapons descended on the middle of the floor again—all but my nobby stick, which fell with telling effect on the Barina's toes.

"Oh, my goodness gracious! My dearest corn! Sasha! run out to the yard and scream Bozhemoi!* three times for me. Oh, dear!" and B. hopped to the sofa and sat nursing her foot and making faces, while the cook wrung her hands and groaned, "Aye! yie! yie! yie!"† at intervals. I laughed,—I could have done nothing but laugh though I had killed somebody,—and sat on the floor rocking in hilarious agony.

"Isabel Morris!" said the Barina, in injured tones, "you seem to find something very funny in

* Good heavens!

† A form of ejaculation used by the lower classes, and applied to all cases, trifling or serious.

crippling your relations. What'r you laughing at?"

"Most—High—and—Noble Barina" I gasped, "I can't help it. I'm sorry, but I must laugh. Oh! ha! ha! ha! I told you I couldn't play cricket!"

"That is no excuse for maltreating the professionals, and then sniggering at them," replied the Barina, relaxing so far as to giggle hysterically.

"Chirrup! chirrup!" remarked the cricket. He had got his breath again, and was seated on an easy chair, seeming to expect the match to go on!

"Oh, you villain!" cried B., throwing her stick and hitting the wall two yards off the target.

"Wide! another one for the cricket," I remarked; "the insect is doing all the scoring!"

"He has won this innings, but he won't carry his wickets—as they call it—much longer. Hal is to bring some officers up to tea, and I'll have the British military on his track. There he goes! hit him, Sasha!"

Sasha dutifully hit the unoffending boards another energetic thump without effect. Then the cricket, seeming to warm up to his business, began hopping round and round us, instead of hiding in corners, and we made for seats and pulled up our feet.

We were seated there—four average-sized women, in a dreadful state of perspiration, baffled and flouted by one outrageous house-grasshopper—when——

Enter—one little cat.

"Purry-wurr," said the cat, pleasantly.

"Chirrup! chirrup!" replied the cricket close by.

"Purr!" said the cat, stepping gently in the direction of the sound.

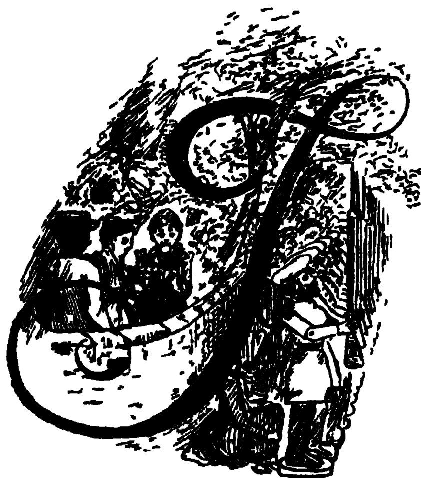
"Chirrup! chirr—" The little cat made a jump, caught the cricket on the hop, and next moment puss was licking her lips, and the cricket had retired from the troublous world with its last word half unspoken.

Then the four average-sized women took down their feet and went their several ways, looking rather sheepish. I am still of opinion that cricket is not a ladies' game, and the Barina, after calculating the cost of the match, inclines to agree with me, "at least, as it is played by some people, who shall be nameless."



CHAPTER VIII.

Warlike Sounds on a Sunday Morning—Vladimir's Day—Sketch of the History of Kieff—Scene from our Garden Wall—Procession of Priests and Holy Friars—We Follow the Crowd—A General Holiday—Members of the Mob—Home and Foreign Manners Compared—Kieff from the Hills—Manly Conduct of Russian Lady—A Cossack Review—Pleasant Ways of Russian Tommy Atkins—Criticism of British Military—The English on Sunday—Our Sundays compared with the Russian.



HERE is a warlike tremor on the waves of warm air that blow in upon me through the rustling leaves this Sunday morning, and though lifelong habit has kept our household in bed—a custom that gives to every Scotch man, woman, and child a long rest on the first day of the week—the Russian populace has been early astir, and there is something unusual going on. Bugles calling, horses galloping over the stony street, the tramp of many feet trained to march to the sound of the drum,

hoarse voices shouting guttural words of command, and then a rattling clatter of many rifle-stocks striking the earth, as of a regiment grounding arms, make a confused medly of sounds.

"What is it, Sasha? War or peace? Has an army arrived to slaughter us in our beds, or is it only the volunteers turning out to show what they wouldn't do on the approach of an enemy?"

But Sasha the handmaid speaks only a heathen tongue—Little Russian—which is Gaelic even to the Big Russian, and she can only gesticulate wildly and repeat "Vladimir, Barishna! Vladimir! Vladimir!"

Then I remember that I was told of a coming high holy-day of the Greek Church, and understand that this is the morning of St. Vladimir's Day, and dress in haste and hurry out to see what the great martial how-de-do has to do with it.

Everybody knows about St. Vladimir, so I had better briefly summarize the facts, seeing that things supposed to be known to everybody in general, are, as a rule, known to nobody in particular.

Vladimir was a Russian grand duke who, after various profane rows with his relations, took to religion, became a convert to the Greek Church, and, under the patronage of the Court of Constantinople, established Christianity here, over nine hundred years ago—A.D., 988, to be correct. Recognizing the advantage of a frequented locality, Vladimir took possession of the site of the temple of Perun, the Russian Jupiter, and there erected the Church of St. Basil.

Here the muscular Christian prince gave battle

to the great gods of the Slavonian Pantheon and overthrew them, substituting Christianity for Paganism, laying the foundation of the modern Jerusalem which was to attract pilgrims and seekers after truth from the uttermost corners of a vast continent, and beginning for Kieff—what it had become in 1017—a city of four hundred churches. In that year its glory was overwhelmed by devastating fire, and its churches laid in ashes. The spirit of the religion that had raised the temples was beyond the power of the destroying element, but the old glory never rose from those ashes. Other towns had risen, churches had spread, and now, though still the Mecca of the Russian pilgrim, Kieff has only about sixty places of worship, and does not supply the whole country with priests and teachers as it used to do.

. . . . . .

Breakfast was an intermittent meal that morning. There was too much to be seen from the garden-wall to allow us to give more than five minutes at a time to the claims of wasting mortality. A long double line of soldiers was drawn up on the road to keep the way clear for the great procession, and very smart and fresh they looked in the brilliant sunshine, dressed in their summer uniform, with white tunics, white caps, and black trousers. Standing as stiff, and apparently as lifeless as wooden dolls, they made one wonder if a little push from behind would knock them over, like Lowther Arcadian heroes, to lie prone and rigid till set up again. At intervals a superior officer,

in gorgeous raiment, came careering along the road on horseback, bent on showing off as much as possible, and looking as if he thought himself the principal attraction of the day, and people having had the privilege of admiring him might go home content, as there couldn't be anything else in the show half so fine as he. At such times somebody seemed to pull a string connected with all the wooden dolls, and they all raised their muskets and opened their mouths and said "Huzza!" three times, then the somebody seemed to let go the string, and the dolls shut their mouths and let their muskets down again, and were as wooden dollish as before. Then another glorious general, of horse mariners or something, came clattering by, showing by *his* manner that it was *he* who was everybody, and nobody else was anybody, when the wooden dolls went through their performance again and shut themselves up once more like clockwork.

The supply of brilliant officers soon ran short, however, and the wooden dolls began to look very human indeed as the sun travelled up the sky and softened the disciplinary glue in their joints, as one might say. The white lines began to waggle and get off the straight here and there, and the black continuations shuffled restlessly as the hot rays poured down and made their position irksome and uncomfortable.

The rolling of drums and the sounds of distant music from the direction of the Lavra at length announced that the procession had started, and, giving up our dangerous gastronomical experi-

ments, we took up our position at the wall for good just as the first banners made their appearance, waving and flashing in the brilliant light as their bearers advanced over the stony road.

First came the priests, bearing aloft pictures of the saints and martyrs, the higher dignitaries clad in dazzling vestments of cloth of gold, and wearing jewels that would have made a drawing-room display look tawdry. Following the priests came a great bareheaded crowd of worshippers, chanting a psalm that sounded familiar in our ears.

"Is not that one of our tunes, B——?" I asked the Barina. "Of course it is; where can they have got it? It is; tut! I know it quite well; wait till I get the book."

The tune was "Wells," and the book confessed that the air was Russian. It had no doubt been chanted by the great ancestors of the adoring thousands who were now filling the air with its simple strains, and marching slowly to the measure.

A horde of ordinary monks, hideous to our irreverent eyes in their black gowns and caps, came next. Their long, matted hair hung untidily about their shoulders, and their general appearance plainly indicated that engagements had prevented them from using anybody's soap that morning. A garden wall and a line of soldiers did not seem to us too great a barrier between those good Christians and our unblessed selves. An acquaintance of ours sat down to rest near some of the monks later in the day, but he did not remain long in the atmosphere of sanctity. One or two of the brothers got up and

went away, leaving so *moving* an impression on the seat that our friend left suddenly. He said he had never felt so thoroughly rested in two minutes all his life.

We were not long in setting out in the track of the procession, for this was a holiday which brought high and low to the street, and no better idea of the cosmopolitan population could be obtained than by mingling with the crowd of holiday-makers. The streets were thronged with people of every nation and degree. Russians, Poles, Germans, Austrians, French, Italians and English were recognizable, and we even noticed two specimens of the irreconcilable Turk; but a horde of others were there, speaking unknown tongues, and dressed in costumes which placed them beyond our knowledge of peoples.

Here we have the fop, with shining hat and creaseless cut-away coat, twirling a much-vexed little moustache to show off his rings, suggesting "The Row, don'tch' know," only he probably never heard of the "Row," seeing he swears in good Russian at the tattered beggar who is driven against him. Yonder are the peasant, in red shirt and baggy blue trousers stuffed into long black boots, and his wife, with bright coloured short skirt, her lace-fringed inner garment very much *en évidence* beneath it, and red boots of the same long-Wellington make. There scowls the "Gorodovor,"* scowling for nothing but that the vilest of Jews has punched him slightly with his elbow. "He! a pig! and the son of a pig! has

* Policeman.

dared to jostle an officer of justice." It is well that he should grovel and crave pardon with the softest of words. "What! another bump! you beast of a mujik.* Is a gorodovor for nothing but to be knocked about by drunken fools?"

"Nay, little father! not drunken, not a drop of vodka this blessed day by the Holy Mother of God. Bozhemoi! who am I that would jostle a high-born officer if the crowd did not press so!"

The stout well-to-do merchant lightly clad in white silk suit and muffin cap, has turned out with his portly lady—jewelled on every finger—on his arm.

Bevies of peasant girls brighten the crowd; their dress a glaring mixture of the boldest colours, and their magnificent hair hanging down nearly to their heels in thick shining plaits tied with bunches of many coloured ribbons.

Every class is represented, and the rule of caste is evident. Parisian bonnets are, of course, plentiful, but the native headdresses of lace and silk and humble cotton have all a meaning, and each indicates a step on the social staircase. Jew and Gentile, high and low, all mingle in that great mass.

We are half-way up Vladimir Hill, and the exercise under the burning sun and through the clouds of dust kicked up by myriad feet is a toil which makes one long for a blast of Ben Nevis wind and the prospect of a refreshing rest on some comfortable snow, as a reward for one's labour.

Oh, reverend and jokative spirit of Sydney Smith, I never expected so fully to appreciate the

* Peasant.

value of your idea—"putting off one's flesh and sitting in one's bones."

Can this be the same sun that occasionally winks at us in a tantalizing way during our apology for summer at home—the sun that never shines long enough or strong enough to make bathing anything but a duty shudderingly performed, at our unfashionable east-coast watering-place?—that often glowers at us with angry, spotty, red face, through a chilly haze of rime even on a June morning?

I can hardly believe it. Why he does nothing but shine here all day and every day. There is never a cloud heavy enough to veil his glory, much less to hide him and give him a chance to sulk, as he so often sulks at Scotland, through heavy banks of moisture, which rain sympathetic tears upon shivering and deluded human beings who have cast off their warm clothes, and donned the gossamer robes suited to the poetic dream of summer. Here we cannot look him in the face, for the atmosphere is undimmed even by smoke, and from flashing river, and dazzling dome, and dusty street, and white-washed building, the hot rays are thrown back, and the heat shimmers and waves about us as if we were suspended over a glowing furnace.

But there is refreshment for tired eyes in looking down upon this lovely city. Built on two hills, Kiéff spreads itself out to a much greater extent than our crowding, barrack-building, town-dwellers would consider at all necessary for the number of its inhabitants. In the Podol or commercial quarter, markets are set up, and merchants congregate.

Midas meets Ananias, and Christian and Jew bargain and cheat, lie and chaffer and wrangle together for filthy lucre. There are groups of unlovely buildings, closely built and huddled together as if to keep mean secrets shaded from the pure light of heaven, and create that sordid, repulsive appearance which seems best suited to the surroundings of the temples of Mammon everywhere.

But the Podol is but a small part of Kieff. Lying low in the valley, its treeless streets and waste of irregular buildings, far from intruding on or spoiling the prospect, only give, by contrast, a new charm to the exquisite picture of Kieff the beautiful. Everywhere else are trees and groves and gardens—not the stunted, smoke-begrimed, struggling trees that try hard to gladden the street-wearied eyes in our smoky manufacturing towns, and are welcome there, even though they but half-accomplish their mission.

There is no coal-smoke here to baulk the efforts of loving nature, shrivelling the young leaf and checking the opening bud, and no hideous factory chimney obtrudes its inartistic form on our notice. Great spreading oaks, thick leafy walnuts, and towering acacias, gay with blossom, wave and rustle overhead. Flowering shrubs and clinging vines surround the houses, while in the public gardens hedges of currant bushes, heavy with unheeded fruit, line the walks.

From the tops of the hills down to the edge of the Dnieper, the new town is studded with magnificent buildings,—churches with moorish domes splendidly

gilt, mansions tastefully designed, universities, clubs and hotels, beautiful in architecture, but all profiting by their natural setting in every shade of green and intersected by acre on acre of garden.

. . . . .

"But if you are to stay here admiring Kieff much longer, Barishna," says the Barin, "we shall miss all the show, and have our labour for nothing."

We face the hill again, but presently are stopped by a cordon of Cossacks who flatly refuse to let us pass. We make a circuit, and manage to get up a considerable distance farther, but are again brought to a standstill by a circle of fierce warriors who, with joined hands, doggedly resist our efforts to proceed.

"If this be a game of kiss-in-the-ring, I know how to play," quoth the Barin. "Hold fast to me, I'm going through those pig-headed bears whatever happens," and with a sudden assumption of authority and command, he breaks down the barrier of hands, and pulling me after him, strides into the circle. I do not look over my shoulder, but expect every moment to feel the cold steel blade of a sword running into my back, and to fall dishonourably wounded at the hands of a savage Cossack. At the other side of the circle the guards hold fast, and no argument will induce them to give way. We are prisoners! and that in a position of publicity not at all to my taste. This might have lasted till the function was all over had it not been for the appearance of a Russian lady who claimed to be the wife of an officer. The barrier gave way before her

haughty assumption, and we passed through after her.

"Make a note of that," said my ungrateful escort; "that is one of the advantages of cool cheek and good square lying. A man could never have carried it off like that."

"How uncharitable," I replied. "Do you really think the lady was fabricating?"

"Think it? sure of it! only a woman can lie like that—saving your presence. A man would have made a regular mess of it."

Our way was now clear, and we reached the Vladimir Monument in time to see the procession again, headed this time by the Archbishop, who sprinkled holy water, drawn from Vladimir's Well, on all within reach, and the people struggled and fought to get within range of the sacred shower.

We witnessed a review of Cossacks after the procession had passed on its way back to the Lavra, and a party of British officers, who joined us, were divided between amusement and contempt by the way the manœuvres were performed. National pride would, of course, help to bias their criticism. The soldiers certainly did not march very well, but the element of downright absurdity was introduced into the display when the horse of one of the officers stopped short and declined to march past at all. A private, seeing what the trouble was, coolly left the line without orders, gave the horse a tremendous kick, and joined the ranks again as if that were quite an every-day performance. The representatives of British glory stared at each other

aghast for a full minute, and then went off into fits of laughter that left them in a state of limp exhaustion.

I tried to get some idea of what would happen to one of our brave defenders found guilty of such a breach of military decorum, but could get nothing but headshakes for reply. But from the officers' horrified expression at the very suggestion of such a thing, I should imagine that any originally-minded "Tommy" who ventured to help along a British review in that way, would be blown from a gun, or in some equally efficacious manner, reduced to fractions that would defy even Max Adeler's coroners to sit on.

. . . . .

This certainly was a pretty way for a Scotchwoman to be spending a Sunday. But one has no choice. There is no English service in Kieff. The nearest minister is established at Odessa, and his parish is so large that the English colony here can only look for a yearly visit, unless some special need arise for pastoral visitation. The regular service does not seem to be missed by the Russianized British, some of whom attend the German church. I tried to find out whether this resignation to the want of religious observances was due to the foreign atmosphere having reduced the Anglo-Kievenes to a state past praying for, or raised them to a condition of blissful innocence beyond the need of spiritual ministration. They all claimed to be considered in the guileless state, and some went so far as to say they never did anything wicked—

when there was the slightest chance of being found out.

But if one is to live comfortably in Rome, one must do as the Romans do, or at least follow the fashions of the place to some extent. There are good people at home who hold it possible to live exemplary lives without going to church, though few have moral courage enough to carry such principles into practice in Scotch communities, where church-going is inseparable from common respectability, let alone religion. Here all our ideas of fitness are turned topsy-turvy. We can have a newspaper on Sunday because it was printed on Saturday, but none on Monday because the printers would not work on Sunday, *as our compositors do.* Shops are open on Sunday from eleven till three o'clock, because the working people and the suburban population cannot make their purchases at any other time. The theatres are open on Sunday evening, but closed on Saturday evening. We should be horrified at the bare mention of play-going a few hours *after* church service, but do not look upon the same thing as sinful a few hours *before* it—the intervening hours being passed in sleep, not preparation.

I certainly felt some qualms of conscience while joining for the first time in the bustle and gaiety of a continental Sunday, but the feeling soon wears off when one perceives that the enjoyment is simply the natural outcome of grateful hearts. Here happiness is fostered by bright skies and warm sunshine, the scent of flowers, the gush of

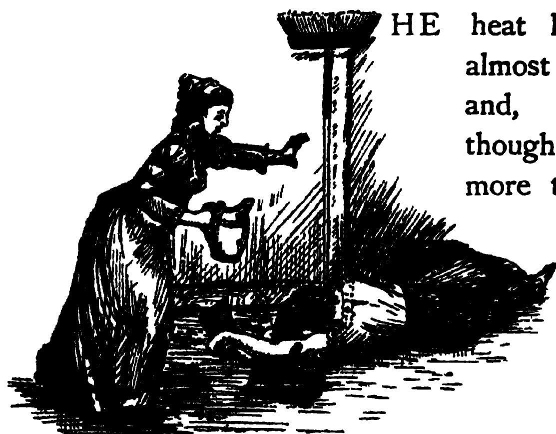
fountains, and all the exhilarating influences of smiling nature.

One is apt to forget, while enjoying such benefits, that one really ought to be worshipping the Giver of all good within four bare walls, seated in a narrow pew, trying to fix the mind upon a possibly dull sermon, with a child in the next seat making horrible attempts at suicide with the aid of peppermint drops, and a slumbering man behind, breathing heavily on the back of one's neck.

The Barina had stayed at home on the baby's account, and, to the nurse's intense gratification, both had been plentifully besprinkled and blessed by the Archbishop on the return of the procession. They were waiting to welcome us at the garden wall, the samovar was hissing alluringly on the verandah-table, ready to refresh us after our toilsome outing, and I had the exquisite feeling, never to be experienced by travellers who have to live in hotels, of being at home abroad.

CHAPTER IX.

Insufferable Heat—Clothes a Burden—Pleasures Interfered with — Servants — Untrustworthiness of Retainers — Kitchen Quarrels—Wages—Work—Easy-going Domestics—Ignorance of Duties—The Slavey summed up—An Alarm—The Tarantula—Capture of the Dangerous Intruder—A Tarantula Story and its Result—Confusion among the Able-bodied Women—Victory.



HE heat has become almost insufferable and, sun - lover though I be, it is more than I can really enjoy. This melting atmosphere seems to soften one's bones, so that one cannot sit upright.

For the first time in seven years, the thermometer records 127° in the sun. Vegetation is shrivelling under it. In the streets horses are dropping down dead, and several ladies have been picked up apparently lifeless, but *they* have been brought round with cold water and coaxing. The "moroshnik," or seller of iced drinks, has disappeared at a time when most wanted. The ice has gone done, and

they have no machines for making more. We have to take our liquids warm, and the butter plate "drops fatness," as an Eastern poet might say.

The servants go about their work in the scantiest of garments, and seem scarcely able to "thole" these. The baby has revolted against the single sock, and wears only a smile of joyous contentment, while we, who must dress, sit in the shade and pant for a breath of cool air.

This state of things interferes with my greatest pleasure—that of going marketing in the bazaar. The attractions of colour, bustle, and sound are ever new and delightful there. Everything is sold on open stalls, and anything, from a pin to a complete house-furnishing, can be seen and handled in the open-air, while the dresses and manners of seller and customer form a study of which I never tire.

The Barina, suffering more than I from the inertia induced by the heat, grumbles gently at being compelled to go down town so often for things we could do very well without.

"I believe you just invent excuses for going to that bazaar, Belle," she says. "How *can* you have the heart to drag me out in that burning sun, especially when you know it takes all the skin off my nose—how *can* you do it?"

"Well, I confess it's not always easy, but I generally manage it somehow," I reply, mischievously misconstruing the complaint.

"You do. If we lived in a sandy desert fifty miles from a shop I believe you would make your

suffering relatives go even that distance with you for a skein of Berlin wool, and after you got home you'd discover you wanted a ha'penny crochet needle, and haul them off again to get it. Take a hammock—two hammocks—anything you like—and be at peace."

"I don't like hammocks; they have a disagreeable way of playing tricks on the uninitiated. I can't trust them since I jumped in at one side and fell out at the other. You want something to clean the marble with, don't you? Let's go down and get it."

"And spend a shilling on droschkys for five copecks' worth of cleaner! What a capital housewife you would make. No, thank you, my dear—do as well to-morrow."

"Very good. I'll let you off to-day on condition you turn out at five to-morrow morning, and take me to the early market with the cook and the big basket, like the lady in the story of the three one-eyed mangles in the 'Arabian Nights.'"*

"Well, we shall see about it; meanwhile perhaps you'll be good enough to go to sleep!"

"Certainly not!—' 'tis the voice of the sluggard' —I want some notes on Russian servants. 'Come into the garden, Maud,' and let me draw some information out of you."

"Notes! more notes! Goodness, why can't you be lazy like everybody else. Solomon should have

* Three one-eyed calenders. Calender: a hot press or mangle; a dervise (Dictionary). Mr. Pecksniff makes a mistake something like this in "Martin Chuzzlewit."

spelt 'ant' with a 'u.' I never knew such a person for notes. The Bank of England is nothing to you for gathering them in!"

"Hush, my dear. Something Russian might overhear us, and I might be hauled off to a gloomy dungeon for a spy. Come, pour out your domestic experiences."

In this land of indolence, where nobody does anything for themselves if they can get anyone else to do it for them, servants are in great demand, and though they are cheap, many of them are required in a Russian household. Their desire for change, dishonest habits, slovenly ways, and general untrustworthiness, make the servant question a more vexed and burning topic for Russian Barinas than the English domestic or even the American "lady who helps" is to the English-speaking "employer." A Russian house has a regiment of retainers attached to it. Each one engages for one set of duties only. There are no "generals" as with us, and it is only by constant scolding and looking-after that the hireling can be made to do what he or she *does* engage for. A mistress cannot lay down a daily course of duties and expect them to be performed; she must see them done, or scold continually. Households cannot be conducted on English lines. The servants, if not continually looked after, take *such* advantage of the trust an English woman naturally places in a well-trained domestic. They go off to sleep at any hour of the day. They annex anything that is left within their reach, and show an aptitude—nay, a preference—for

falsehood, even when found at fault *in flagrante delicto*. In short, the Russian servant is a trial that would drive the methodical British matron out of her senses. It is impossible to treat a native domestic with the consideration an English servant's worth and independence claim for her. If one stand aside to allow a tray-laden tablemaid to pass,



if one, rather than wait till the bell is answered, serve herself, or prefer to do so without asking their help at all, she is looked upon with the same contempt the ignorant "nigger" has for a mistress who stoops to do the slightest menial labour. A lady who would retain her authority must give in to the indolent habits of the nation, and be

served with everything, at whatever waste of time.

A Russian mistress and her daughters loll on their sofas, and call for everything, even to the re-arranging of their cushions, and the lighting of their cigarettes.

This—to us—intolerable state of things in a well-to-do Russian family means the retaining of a host of idle servants, each one doing a trifling set of duties. Selfish and jealous of each other, they make the kitchen a scene of continual squabbling and an occasional battle royal, owing to the friction that is continually at work there, and the quickness of the native temper.

A Russian lady—whose acquaintance I made—though conducting her house on a system very much in advance of Russian households as a rule, told us some of her troubles in the servant line, which would make a British employer's hair stand on end.

This lady had eight servants, and their ways were a ceaseless torment. They carried tales about each other, tales of real and imaginary thefts, of fathers, brothers, and cousins (?) kept and fed on the premises.* They formed parties, and interfered with each other's duties, and worried and quarrelled until the rancour developed into a regular row royal, and the entire batch had to be turned out in a body, the family being left helpless and wretched

* This is quite common. A Russian seldom knows how many people his roof covers. My sister's cook had a relative's family housed in the unused coach-house for three days before they were discovered.

until the kitchen was re-garrisoned with another regiment, whose ways and manners were just the same as the last.

Each servant has to produce a passport on being engaged, and this is retained by the employer. The passport, like all others, is issued by the police authorities, and the servants are practically under police surveilance. They cannot escape immediate detection if their unfortunate inclination to dishonest practices should lead them into any serious trouble. This does not make them honest, however, and the greatest worry of an Englishwoman's existence in Russia is the demand for constant care and watchfulness to keep everything under lock and key, and make inventories and take stock continually. This probably explains to some extent the bareness of Russian rooms and want of anything beyond indispensable articles to be seen in their houses. One cannot leave an article of personal adornment or a toilet requisite on the dressing table and confidently expect to find it there half an hour afterwards.

Then, as for lying, a girl would swear by the heavens above and the earth beneath that she had never seen the missing article, though found leaving the apartment holding the booty behind her back, in the absence of a pocket to put it in.

It is lamentable, but true.

A servant is expected to provide her own mattress, and can pitch her moving camp in any odd corner she finds suitable; the idea of providing rooms for servants would strike a Russian house-

keeper as something supremely ridiculous. The servants sleep on the kitchen stove in winter, and in the corridor or out in the yard in summer. My hostess, of course, revolted at such barbarous customs from the first. But not only did Russian visitors exclaim against her spoiling her servants with indulgences, but the conservative hirelings themselves grumbled at being assigned to apartments instead of being allowed to huddle together at pleasure.

A female cook may be had for eight roubles a month, a housemaid for six,* but the work they are required to do is light and easy, all the heavy work falling to the British domestic being entirely dispensed with here.

There are no grates to be polished. Wood is the only fuel used, and although the forests are becoming so thin and wood so dear† that coal must soon be introduced, to the loss of purity in the atmosphere and the increase of dirt and trouble, the English fireplace is still almost unknown, and a great deal of work is saved.

The stoves—unless the kitchen one already referred to—are built into the walls and tiled. Then there is no heavy bed-making to do. The bed consists of a mattress, generally a spring one, a pillow and a sheet.

The sheet is all that can be borne in summer, and

* Sixteen shillings and twelve shillings nominally, but the rouble varies in value like the rupee.

† A sasheen (7 cubic feet) costs twenty roubles (£2) in summer, and more in winter.

in winter the house is so thoroughly heated in every corner, that a coverlet is the only addition required. There are no carpets to be swept and beaten, no floors to be scrubbed, and no straight-backed Russian maid would stoop to scrub them if there were. I was amused to watch the ingenious process of house-cleaning in operation the first day I was here. The girl brought a pail of water, a long broom, and a cloth, to the scene of operations, and began by tearing a hole in the middle of the cloth, and running the handle of the broom through the hole.

This allowed the cloth to fall over the head of the broom, so that when dipped in water, and applied to the painted floor, it flapped under the broom, and took up all the dust effectively. Drying was not required, as the heat dried the floor in five minutes. Round-shouldered or stooping women are not often met with, and no wonder.

As to table laying, and all the superfluous labour which the British housekeeper loves to expend on the elegant aids to refined existence, they are quite beyond the understanding of the Russian, high or low. A Russian table-maid cannot conceive what people want with different plates for soup, fish, entrées and sweets, and her Russian employer does not initiate her.

"What! A clean plate for another course? Boshemoi! Have Englishmen half a dozen stomachs that they are so particular about mixing their food?" is the common exclamation of a Russian observing English ways for the first time?

Then as to forks and knives, a new maid unused to foreign ways, looks at the selection of table cutlery placed in her untrained hands, wonders why on earth those "Angliski" cannot eat with their fingers like other people, but unable to solve the problem, throws the weapons down in a heap in the middle of the table, and reckons that's all right.

On the whole, when one considers the upbringing of the class from which servants are taken, it is no great wonder the girls' ideas should be somewhat crude.

The servant probably leaves a family whose whole earthly possessions consist of the required number of mattresses with as many pillows as possible,* a pot for making "borsht," or soup, an earthenware bowl, and a spoon for each member of the family. There might have been an extra bowl or a spoon or two in the family chest for visitors, but that would be a case of exceptional style.

If the maid has had some experience in a Russian mansion before coming into foreign service, she knows a little perhaps of what a servant should be able to do, but a great deal that she should not, and under an English mistress, *must* not do. Taking her altogether, and adding to what I have enumerated, the fact that cooks in general have a chronic weakness for vodka, and servants, as a rule, a restless desire for change; that they have besides an

* The lower classes look upon the possession of many pillows as a sign of wealth. Besides those in use, pillows may often be seen piled up in their huts. A pile built up against the wall from floor to ceiling is a mark of enviable wealth.

almost Chinese hatred of all foreigners which no amount of kind treatment seems to affect, the Russian domestic is not a pleasure, not even a tolerable nuisance—she is a slow torture or chronic hysterics, perhaps, if the mistress has been lucky in her selection, but more likely she is a visitation of Providence—a torpedo liable to go off at any moment, or a slumbering volcano which may break out when least expected.*

. . . .

We were still seated in the garden when the nurse suddenly made her appearance in a state of speechless fright and agitation, and began to gesticulate wildly with her hands for lack of words.

"What is it, woman?" cried the Barina, springing to her feet.

"Oh! Barina, oh!"

"Is it the baby? Can't you speak?"

"Oh, no, no, Barina!—a tarantula! a tarantula!!"

"Oh, good gracious! my bairn!" cries the Barina, making a dash for the house, while I stare at the shaking and excited nurse, unable to gather any idea of the trouble from the flood of voluble Russe the Nyannia now pours out before me.

* While this is quite true of Russian servants as a whole, there must be exceptions. If they could be engaged as our "generals" are, singly and uncontaminated by previous service, their good points would probably show themselves, and bad ones be easily corrected, as the peasants are really good simple people. The greater share of blame certainly rests on the employer, who does nothing but scold, sees after nothing herself, and turns the girl away rather than take the trouble to train her.

Out comes the Barina again, bearing the astonished baby, flushed from recent sleep, and plumps him down in a hammock.

"Why didn't you fetch the baby first, stupid? Where is the tarantula?"

"In the Barishna's room, Barina, on the ceiling——"

"On your ceiling, Belle," translated the hostess, calming down, "a great poisonous spider on your ceiling. Nice, isn't it? Come in and view the animal."

"Is that a tarantula?" I exclaimed, looking up at the object pointed out by the white and shaking domestics. "Why, I have been wondering what the thing was for ever so long."

"You have!" queried the Barina. "Well, the interesting native has probably been down on his rope inspecting you lots of times at nights."

"Ugh! what a horrible thought! I might have been bitten fifty times over."

The tarantula was nothing fearful to look at. Curled up in a state of rest, it looked like a large walnut or a fir-cone, and never having seen it move, I concluded it to be something of that kind, and never connected the floating strings, which had often annoyed me by sweeping across my face, with this object.

"You had better take it down," said the Barina to the nurse.

"I, Barina!" replied the nurse, turning green at the very thought. "O—o—oh! Sasha, you are young and smart?"

"I!" exclaims Sasha. "Oh. Boshemoi! I daren't! Cook, perhaps——!"

"Cook, indeed!—I have the dinner to mind. What cowards!" says the bold cook, with chattering teeth. "Nyannia, I wonder at you—a woman of forty——"

"Come, come!" cries the Barina, "we must have him somehow. Bring the step-ladder."

The step-ladder is brought, and planted under the intruder, who slumbers peacefully, all ignorant of approaching trouble.

"Now," said the Barina, "he has to be taken down and destroyed, or he'll go scuttling into some corner, and keep us in continual terror. Nyannia, take something in your hand, and catch him while we hold the steps."

The shaking, but obedient nurse gets a piece of newspaper, and mounts the steps; but the task is too great for her nerves. Three or four times her hand approaches the reptile to be shudderingly drawn back again, as the poor woman fancies she sees the spider move, and nearly falls off the ladder with fright.

"Think of that!" sneers the cook, standing at the door ready to run; "a woman of forty——"

"Suppose *you* try, Masha!" says the Barina, turning suddenly on the derider.

"Me! Oh, Barina, the pot is running over!" cries the maid of the dripping-pan, vanishing between the curtains like a shot.

"You will never succeed that way," I remarked, more amused than frightened. "If nurse does

catch hold of the thing, she will throw it down. I should, I know. Get a box or a bag, and knock it into it with a stick."

The very thing—everybody knew that was the only way. An empty starch-box is produced, and without any trouble the dangerous insect is imprisoned and brought down buzzing and kicking in angry protest, like an alarum running down.

The adventure should have ended here, but the nurse was proud of her achievement, and began a long story about some other tarantula she had become acquainted with in early life.

This one had been in the same position, "hanging above the bed of a man who slept with his mouth open," but at this interesting point the words of the garrulous nurse came too fast for the laughing Barina to catch and translate, and the nurse, getting excited, flung her hands about, and poured out her tale faster and faster.

"What is it, Barina? did the tarantula fall into——?"

"Hush! Yes—that is, I suppose so. Then there was a dog—the man's dog—dog with spots——"

"Dear! Did the spotted dog go after the tarantula?"

"Nonsense!" cries the Barina, in a fit of laughter. "There's a faithful horse in it now."

"Oh, come, you know, the man couldn't swallow a horse——"

"Stop! stop! Nyannia, what did the dog do?"

But the narrator couldn't stop for particulars.

"Well, the horse—what about the horse?"

The nurse was about to explain, but, lost in her dramatic recital, she had forgotten that she was gesticulating with a frail paste-board box. Her tightened grasp had made a small opening at the lid, and at this moment, to her horror, a hairy leg was pushed out, and touched her on the fingers.

With a scream of terror she threw the box away, and followed by the rest of us, made for the door, where for a moment we stuck in a most undignified jumble (the servants calling upon more saints and martyrs in the brief struggle than I had ever heard of in all my life before), and then scrambled out to the open air.

"Now you *have* done it, Nyannia," said the Barina, after we had nearly shaken ourselves to pieces with laughter. "We shall never know when or where that wretched beast will turn up, and shall be in constant fear of our lives."

"Aye! yie! yie! yie!" moaned the Nyannia, crossing herself in great distress. "Oh, Barina, I saw you welcome the visitors on the doorstep * last night. I knew something would come of it! Aye! yie! yie!"

"Fiddlesticks!" replied her unbelieving mistress, irreverently. "Go and look after the baby. We must go back and find that tarantula."

"If we don't," I replied, "I shall never sleep in that room again: never! never!! never!!!"

* This brings bad luck. No Russian will shake hands across the threshold. If met at the door, the visitor must pass right into the hall before being welcomed.

"Very good, my dear. You can have a bed outside, with a lot of clammy frogs to keep you company. Think of waking with a nice, cold, sociable frog nestling against your cheek!"

"Ugh, what a country! I'm sure to dream of tarantulas whether we catch this one or not. If he be off, he will most likely come back to take his revenge out of me."

We went back by different ways, and peered through the two curtained doorways of my room, as if an octopus were there ready to clutch us with a long arm, or a tiger waiting to spring.

But fortunately our precautions were needless.

The box was lying as it had fallen, lid undermost, and the deadly reptile had not escaped, but was still waving the ugly limb through the opening.

Then the erewhile shuddering handmaid, strong now in the armour of big boots, donned for the occasion, and brave in presence of a helpless enemy, marched in and scrunched both box and prisoner with one vindictive stamp.

"*That's* all right," said the Barina, with a sigh of relief, "unless his relations come to hunt him up."

"Hush! for goodness sake. Every mosquito-bite will feel like the poison fangs of a tarantula now. I should like to know more about Nurse's story, though. It left us in a very unsatisfactory state of doubt as to whether the man swallowed the tarantula, and then the spotted dog, and then tried to swallow the horse——!"

"Or the dog swallowed the man in the endea-

vour to catch the tarantula, and the faithful horse swallowed the lot."

"It is very annoying not to know. It would be such a subject for notes. If you only knew the language better——"

"Bother your notes!" exclaims the Barina, flouncing off.

My sister does not like her linguistic powers to be undervalued evidently. I shall put it in the notes, though, and leave the blanks to be filled in according to taste.



CHAPTER X.

Going to Market—The Bazaar in Early Morning—Dishonesty of Dealers—Sounds, Scenes, and People—Price of Provender —How Business is Done—Shopping—Russian Arithmetic A Scotch Story—Difficulties of the Language—Humiliation of the Barina—Dreadful Experiences in a Droschky—A Funeral—Loss of Goods and Temper.



LAZINESS cannot be carried out to its greatest extent during the summer even in Russia. Even the lazy must eat, and to procure the necessaries of life during the hot months some one must get up very early in the morning, as no perishable articles of food are exposed for sale after the sun has fully asserted itself.

The duty of going to early market falls to the cook as a regular thing, and a very paying thing the male chef of a Russian household makes of it. Many of them, on entering on an engagement, make a stipulation that they are to do the marketing.

Under such an arrangement the housekeeper who does not superintend all the affairs of the kitchen cannot protect herself from fraud. The simple way for the cook to obtain his commission is to falsify prices; but where the mistress is too knowing to be taken in in that way the cook simply buys too much of everything and re-sells the overplus. Very few Russian ladies concern themselves sufficiently about the housekeeping to be able to check the daily consumption in their large establishments, and a regular system of pillage is carried on under their helpless noses. The Barina having been brought-up in the sensible British fashion, can of course prevent that sort of thing, because, besides being able and willing to look after her own home, she can not only direct the servants, but share the work herself, if need be. Russian cookery is not suited to British tastes, and practical superintendence is absolutely necessary. There is this to be said of the native servants, however: they are not only quick to pick up, but as anxious to learn English notions as their social superiors.* One would naturally suppose that servants who have been used to the systemless Russian housekeeping would

* After seeing some Russian table manners, I was rather surprised to see the bungalow servants at dinner in the yard one Sunday afternoon. They were gathered round an enormous pie, set on a cloth-covered table, and eating with knives and forks. "And why shouldn't they behave like decent Christians?" said the Barina. "Our Russian friends say I spoil them with indulgences, but I don't mind that. I taught Masha how to make pies and other English dishes, and am rather proud to see the rest taking to respectable ways."

be unable to tolerate a Scotch mistress who makes it her business to know the value of everything; but such is not the case. While Russian barinas, who have been brought up to do absolutely nothing, and do it "particularly well," constantly bewail their domestic grievances, bad servants and constant changes, the servants at the bungalow seem to find it a comfortable place, and when they come to understand something of foreign ways, do not wish to leave.

The reason, no doubt, is to be found in the treatment they receive, and must appreciate. Social superiors of their own nationality treat them worse than they would their dogs; and they endure it, because the blood of the serf still runs in their veins, and the idea of asserting their claim to be human beings, having rights as well as their masters, never seems to enter their heads.

That so absurd an idea never strikes a Russian of higher caste (unless he be a thorough-going Socialist, and such an one is seldom met with) is exemplified on all occasions. As an instance, a Russian acquaintance does not wait to hint to the host or hostess that he is in need of refreshment. Having once been made welcome, he makes himself at home ever after, and orders the servants about just as he would his own. The Eastern welcome, "My house is yours," is heartily given and carried out in hospitable Russia.

"Is the Barin at home?" asks a visitor.

"Yes, Barin," replies the servant.

"Then present my card and bring me a glass of beer skoro.* I am thirsty."

"Sey-tchass,† Barin," and both orders are carried out as a matter of course.

A Scotch servant would not only resent the tone of address, but would probably let the cool party know her opinion of "impident scemps wha took upon them to order ither folks' servants," however familiar the visitor might be with her employers.

The Russian servant would never dream of resenting the manner of speech. The visitor is a Barin; his tone of authority proves it. She is a mujik,‡ and, although no longer a slave, the laws of caste are so stringent and so universally respected, that she would not dare dispute his right to command, or fancy she might refuse to obey any one but the employer who pays for her services.§

. . . . . .

According to agreement, the Barina turned out with me at five o'clock in the morning, and we set off down the hill, followed by the cook with the big basket *en route* for the bazaar.

The scene was fresh, inspiriting, and altogether delightful. Chaffering is the rule. Such a thing as taking a dealer's word for anything is quite unknown here. Every seller puts a high price on the

* Quick. † Immediately. ‡ Peasant.

§ I was pained to notice the servile spirit so strongly exhibited. The Nyamia, "the woman of forty," must have had some experience of the days of actual serfdom, and appeared to be constantly in dread of a blow when found in a fault. Her sudden start and terrified contraction of the shoulders at the first word of reproof made us shudder. It seemed as if she felt the cut of a whip.

goods, knowing he must come down. This margin is sometimes placed at four times the value of the article to us, who are, of course, known to be foreigners. If recognized as English, the most shameless imposition is attempted, as the Angliski get credit here, as everywhere else abroad, for the possession of untold wealth. After unblushingly swearing that twenty-five copecks will not leave him a fraction of profit on some desired trifle, the honest shopkeeper will come down by easy stages, "gospiddying" and protesting all the way, and finally hand you the article with a smile, and accept five copecks with a contented "Blago-doroo!"

"The air is full of noises strange and sweet." The rough guttural "Little Russian" of the market women, the finer tones of the town dwellers, and the modulated voices of ladies out to get fresh air and buy some fruit for themselves, mingle with the squeals and cackling of the live stock (these animals actually seeming to complain with a foreign accent), and the confusion of noises contributed by the bullock teams and their drivers. Many of the women are tall and comely. Some would be beautiful had not exposure to the extremes of temperature roughened and disfigured their complexions; but their manner of life does not foster good looks. One thing is very noticeable: the enviable wealth of hair they possess. A peasant woman may often be seen whose hair, out of plait, descends nearly to her feet, and veils her like a garment. The care and taste displayed in the

sewed work of the "rubaska"* make that garment a study. This is their own work, and the various embroideries the outcome of individual ideas. Knowledge of harmony they have none. The brighter the contrasts in the rest of their dress the better they like it. The costume is generally finished off by a string or two of beads at the throat.

Our cook stops first at the butcher's stall. Here there is comparative peace. The meat has a standard price, according to cut, and there is nothing but quality to wrangle about.

Here, again, the total change of ways and manners is manifest. The cuts are entirely different from ours, and I would not know roasting from boiling.† The roast is denuded of its bones and fat, and the stately sirloin is not to be seen. Meat, like every other needful commodity, is cheap enough, twopence halfpenny a pound for ordinary cuts, and fivepence for roasting beef, or, as they call it, fillet.

The buyers take great liberties. No English myassnik‡ would put up with such customers. They all handle and smell the meat, and they have not all the cleanest of fingers. Then, after poking and pricing half the stock, they often shrug their shoulders and go away without buying anything.

The bread stalls are the next objects of interest. They sell all sorts of bread, made into rings and

* Chemise.

† At dinner no meat is carved in the dining-room. Roast meat and fowls are cut in pieces in the kitchen, and carried round to each guest in turn.

‡ Butcher.

rolls of many shapes; but the most observable are the colossal loaves of chornee chlab—black bread. The customers handle this, too. We do not mind that, as we get our supply from a shop; besides, when one buys a loaf of chornee chlab, it is troublesome to have to hire a man to take as much of it home as he can carry, and go back for the rest.

Seriously, the loaves are immense, some of them weighing twelve pounds. I should imagine such a loaf on a peasant's table, after the family have each had a tear at it in Russian fashion, must look something like a piece of the wall of Alexandria after Admiral Seymour had torn it up with shot.

The real fun of the fair centres round the fruit, vegetable, and farm produce stands. Competition is plentiful and customers do not scruple to buy a few apples at one, some grapes at another, and go to a third to cheapen tomatoes, although each stand has a full supply of everything.

The voices rise from soft persuasive tones and coaxing compliments to screams of protest, while shrieks of reduced terms follow the retiring bargainer.

Ejaculations of gospiddy! boshemoi! and chort!* fly about like wildfire, and buyer and seller shrug their shoulders, raise their eyebrows, spread their palms and scream at each other till one would think the market was disorganized and there would be a free fight immediately.

Our cook lifts a lovely tomato.

"How much?"

* "Good God!" "good heavens!" and "the Devil!"

"Twenty copecks for ten; pretty one, only twenty."*

"Boshemoi! what robbery! I'll give you ten."

"Ten copecks for such tomatoes! You cannot buy them anywhere else for twenty-five. Come, little daughter, twenty copecks."

Cook's ears vanish between her shoulders, and she turns away.

"See then," screams the seller, picking out the most beautiful from her stock, "eighteen copecks. It will ruin me, but you may have them for eighteen."

"Nyet,"† says the cook, with disdain.

Then the trouble begins, and the two women scream and wrangle till they seem to be on the point of slapping each other's faces, when the argument suddenly ceases, cook triumphantly stows the love apples in the big basket, pays fifteen copecks, the pair exchange smiling good mornings, and we move on to something else. The stalls are heaped with every kind of fruit, some of the tropical kinds being unknown to us. It is all cheap,—a splendid bunch of black grapes may be had for a penny. Big apples, pears, bananas, and so forth, at ten for three pence, or even less. Eggs are also sold in tens, and their cheapness astonishes the pilgrim, who is accustomed to look with suspicion on very small new laids which cost less than two shillings a dozen. The Barina sometimes says, in joke, "We maun be canny wi' the eggs. They are up to three pence for ten to-day.

* Five copecks—one penny. † No.

The butter is unceremoniously subjected to the handling and tasting process, like everything else; thumbs of all sorts and sizes are dug into the tubs, and thereafter sucked by their owners. This does not suit my ideas at all; but I am told I am too particular.

The feathered tribes are sold "all alive, oh," and their protests, as they are pulled about for examination, add considerably to the din. An occasional diversion is caused when a duck or a rooster breaks loose, and scuttles off through the crowd, with excited cackle or quack, as if it had suddenly remembered an appointment and could not possibly stay any longer.

We buy a pair of nice hens for ninepence, and everything else seems to be equally cheap, milk alone having about the same value as at home.

There is plenty more to see, for every requirement is provided for, and the articles of native manufacture are very attractive; but they can be seen at any time. We have spent two hours in the bazaar, the big basket is full, and the animation of the scene cannot keep off the growing sense of fatigue.

We hail a droschky, and with the basket at our feet, drive cheerily home to breakfast, feeling that we have earned it for once.

Shopping is not nearly so pleasant to the stranger as buying in the bazaar.

In the shop you must ask to see what you want, and without command of the language this is a serious matter. Window dressing is not practised

to anything like the extent we are used to; but the free and easy native thinks nothing of turning over a shopkeeper's entire stock and going away without making a purchase.

Most of the shops have a sign painted outside, indicating the particular kind of articles they supply; the tailor, a coat; the shoemaker, a boot, and so on. This is not a mere advertisement, like the hanging signs at home, but an actual necessity, as only a very small proportion of the lower classes can read.

The greatest drawback to the pleasure of shopping to us is the persistent way the shopkeepers thrust English goods on our notice, and urge us to buy things two years out of fashion, at double the price we could have them for at home.

We cannot get them to understand that Russian manufactures have a greater attraction for us. They bring forth forgotten adornments and things that are, to us, sweet memories of the past, and protest that they have just arrived from London.

They try to tempt us with hats and trimmings of 1888, and stare when we shrug our shoulders at them.

They follow us out with assurances that they have consignments on the way from London which will fill our British souls with delight, as if we had made a pilgrimage to Russia to make a collection of relics, which no English provincial dealer in bankrupt stocks would dare to exhibit in his window at half price.

When we do manage to make the man under-

stand we want something Russian, and get him to produce some of the products of the country, the shameless way he tries to take advantage of our innocence is truly saddening.

I fancied some nice ornamented wooden spoons, of peasant make, in a shop one day, and lifted one.

"How much?"

"Twenty copecks, Barishna,—very cheap."

"You unblushing scoundrel," says the Barina, in English, "why don't you knock us down, and take our money at once."

The man bows profoundly, evidently taking the Barina's remark as a compliment.

"Hush, dear," I said, "he might understand."

"No hope of that. It might do him good if he did. I might call him a pig or a Jew,* and he would bob and smile like a tea-shop Mandarin."

I selected four more spoons, and asked the price of the lot.

"Twenty-five copecks, Barishna."

"Do you hear that?" said the Barina, laughing, "there's Russian arithmetic for you. If one spoon costs twenty copecks, how much will five cost?—answer, twenty-five copecks. Oh, you depraved robber, you cheat deliciously! You would swindle your grandmother out of her spectacles!"

The honest shop-keeper smiled, and bowed again with increased pleasure, and I took the spoons as

* These are the most degrading epithets that can be applied to a Russian.

we had neither time to waste, nor words to wrangle with.

"Some people should never be allowed to go shopping," said the Barina, "why didn't you offer ten?"

The articles did not seem dear at a penny each, but if I had had the language at my fingers' ends I might doubtless have brought the price down ten copecks at least.

The dealers all use the Chinese sounpan or ball frame for counting with. They do not offer to send home purchases, as our shopkeepers do.

If our purchases are extensive, we get a droschky at the door, if small, we carry them.

The Barina tells me one only wants two words and a shrug to go shopping with. The words are "Daite mne"—(give me.) It is, however, a great advantage to be conversant with the swear words, if one is able to adopt the comfortable religious notions of the boy in the familiar Scotch story, which may not be known to everybody.

. . . . . .

The fasts, now wearing out of fashion in Scotland, used to be held as sacred as Sabbaths, but were recognised by different counties at different times, so that ministers could get each other's help in dispensing the Sacrament on the Sunday following.

On one of those holy days, a minister happened to be out walking, for meditation, I suppose, not pleasure, near a low wall, which, at that point, separates Perthshire from Forfarshire, when his ears were assailed by strains of unholy music, and

following the direction of the profane sound, he found a boy seated just at the other side of the wall mending his fishing rod, and whistling "Tullochgorum" with all the power of his lungs.

"Hoo daur ye, sir!" cried the irate minister. "Hoo daur ye whustle or mend fishin' wands either, on the Lord's day. Dae ye no ken it's the fast?"

"No a' dinna," answered the laddie coolly. "I ken it's the *Farfar* fast, but it's no *oor* fast ye'll fin'," and he resumed the performance of "Tullochgorum" with renewed zest.

If we could swear comfortably in Russian, because it is not *our* language, we might save money, but our consciences are always ready to tell us the truth and make unkind criticisms.

. . . . .

The language is dreadfully hard to acquire. The very eccentricities of the letters are a severe study. It seems to me that a Russian poster could only be read by a street arab, who finds standing on his head as comfortable as the natural position, so many of the letters seem to be upside down.

Some people cannot learn. I have met an English lady several times, who has been fifteen years in Russia, and cannot express herself yet.

This lady came to borrow our dvornik,* as she had been doing at frequent intervals for months, in order to get a basket she expected from England. The dvornik had never been able to get the

* Porter, yard-keeper and orra man. He keeps the yard tidy, and has also to look after that portion of the street adjoining the house, there being no public scavengers.

basket at the depôt because it had not arrived. No wonder either—it was only *months* overdue—not *years*. We stupid Angliski are always hurrying things.

The lady fancied that the man had not understood the instructions given him by the Barina, when he could never find that basket, and at B.'s request, took him in hand herself.

"Dvornik," she began, "my basket, sey tchass!"

(Man looks vacant.) "Goodness gracious! tchelavyek, my basket, Daite mne *my—travelling-basket* you know, *skoro!*"*

Of course, the poor dvornik could only shrug and look as sad as if he had lost all his relations.

The Barina's attainments go much further than that, but even *her* knowledge is not sufficient for all occasions.

One day we wanted to buy some little present for a child, and remembering the pleasures of keeping shop on childhood's rainy days, we decided on a pair of scales, and went in search of them. Shop after shop we entered. Dealer after dealer bowed and smiled, or shrugged and stared, or blushed and covered a giggle, or looked helpless and thunderstruck.

"What can all the fools mean?" said the Barina, "some of them must have scales I'm sure."

"Perhaps they don't understand. Are you sure your verbs are all right?"

"Of course; besides, if you have your nouns

* My basket—immediately! Goodness gracious, man, my basket! give me my travelling basket *soon*.

right, the verbs don't matter much. Ha, there goes Captain A——, let's ask him."

"Good morning, Captain A——," said B., dashing into business at once. "What would you think if I said to you,"—then she repeated the Russian sentence she had been driving into all the tradesmen.

"My dear madam," replied the gallant captain, "I should think you were putting me in a place very hard for a man to get out of. Your words mean, 'what is my weight?'"

"Oh, my goodness!" groaned the Barina, while I felt I must sit down somewhere to laugh with ease and comfort, "and I've been putting that conundrum to shopkeepers all the morning. What could they think?"

"They! Oh, nothing. They would put it down to English eccentricity, to which there is no limit, but if you like I shall be glad to accompany you round all the shops, and ask the question over again, in the right way."

' But what if they should all have scales?"

"Well, we'll look at them all, price them, call all the dealers thieves, and come away, according to the custom of the country."

The greatest difficulty the stranger finds in the language is the close resemblance of certain words to each other in pronunciation. This is a constant cause of most ridiculous mistakes.

One day the Barina had extensive purchases to make in the culinary department, and a capital opportunity to exhibit the full powers of her

linguistic accomplishments. We had several shops to call at, and left the orders without waiting to see the things made up, calling at each afterwards on the way home, and getting the parcels piled up in the droschky.

We had a particularly dilapidated vehicle that day, and had to hold on to each other to keep ourselves from being jolted out, in rattling over the rough roads. The parcels had to look after themselves, and they *did*. They jumped and tumbled about at our feet at every jolt, and every individual parcel wanted to get out. We were covered with confusion and perspiration in agonising endeavours to keep a dignified pose among a riotous assortment of brown paper-bags and packages which would not keep still, and kept us in a state of torment lest they should burst and strew our path with miscellaneous necessaries of life, and luxuries of the table. Our efforts to hold our own places, and quell the rebellion among the goods, became every moment more futile. When we made a grab at a bag and caught it on the point of escape at one side, two parcels would take a mean advantage, and hop out at the other, and the driver had to be poked in the back, and the conveyance stopped, till we collected the deserters.

This sort of thing began to get trying after a while, especially as quite a number of people took an amused interest in our doings, and the exercise was very severe in the heat. We could see the papers giving way too, and were filled with dread.

"Good gracious," exclaimed the irritated B., as a big bag and two small packets got out for a roll in the dust.

"Shall we *never* get home? Stoy!"

We rescued that lot but were only started when two more parcels seceded.

"I can't stand much more of this," said B. as she gathered them up, "I wonder what those people see to grin at?"

"Perhaps they think we are doing it for fun. I should enjoy a giggle myself if I were not an overworked performer in this circus."

"Stoopeye, Eesvooschik!"* cried B., and off we went at a gallop for about thirty yards when there was a sudden severe jolt, five parcels got up and left with one accord, and two of them burst. We both got out, feeling inclined to say something dreadfully wicked.

"What do you want with all those candles?" I asked, looking on the spread with dismay.

"Candles! I didn't or——oh, we want lots of candles, we use a great many."

"Well, what is the bag of nails for?"

"I never ordered nails," replied B., in great distress. "It's a conspiracy. Those shopkeepers have given us anything they liked, because we didn't watch them!"

"Perhaps your nouns were not quite so perfect as you thought, my dear. Gather away, anyhow. Here's a show of some kind coming. If we joined it, we mightn't look so conspicuously ridiculous. We

* Drive fast, Coachman.

just want a brass band to be a first class entertainment.'

"A show! That's a funeral,* you heathen! Don't you see the people taking their hats off? Jump in quick and let us get away. This is simply awful."

We made another start and dropped only one more parcel as we toiled up the hill nearing home. It was a total loss. A big bag which had behaved itself with exemplary sobriety all the way took a sneaking advantage of our sense of security in the slow pace we were going at, rolled heavily off and burst, and its contents went hopping down the incline on their way back to town.

"Garlic!" I exclaimed, "what are you going to do with such a quantity of that detestable vegetable? Stoy!"

"Nothing! I don't want garlic, and I won't have it. This is intolerable! Go on! What are you stopping for?"

"But, Barina, the garlic,"—began the driver, pointing backwards with his whip.

"Go on! go on!" cried the Barina excitedly.

* A funeral car is a lavishly-gilt carriage, looking in the distance like nothing else but the gaudy band chariot of a circus procession. On a nearer view it is seen to be decked with flowers, and open on all sides. It is followed by one or two priests, and a few mourners in ordinary attire. As it passes, every pedestrian stands still and makes the sign of the cross, every man and boy uncovering his head and remaining uncovered till the procession has passed. This custom looks very well, and does no harm in summer, but imagine what it means to take the close fur cap from the head on a winter's day with the thermometer at 20° R.!

"You were not so ready to stop before. Get on for goodness sake, and let us get home."

"There are some people," I quoted, as we stopped at our own gate, "who should *not* be allowed to go shopping, but there are others——"

"Don't revile me just yet, Miss, *don't!*" interrupted B., in a warning voice. "I haven't got a pinch of temper left."—"But," I continued, *sotto voce*, as I helped to gather up an incongruous mixture of household necessaries, "there are others who cannot only do shopping, but can make a good pantomime out of it as well, and make their relations do a share of the clown business.'



CHAPTER II.

A Day in the Country—Consecration—Russian Villages—Scenes on the Road—Datchas—Furnishings for a Country House—Pursued by a Russian Officer—False Alarm—A Lost Romance—Arrival at the Plantation—Russian Dinner and Diners—On the Lake—In the Lake— Bathing Dresses never Heard of—Tableaux, Diana and Nymphs—A Moonlight Journey Home—Fire!—How Kieff Authorities Grapple with the Fire Fiend.



THE Kieffenes were loyally engaged in hanging out their banners and displaying their best bunting in honour of the Empress, whose name day it was, on the Sunday morning we started for a day's outing, which promised to be both novel and delightful. We had received an invitation to visit a Russian family at their "Datcha," as a Russian country house is called, and in addition to the pleasure we adults expected, in leaving the busy haunts of men entirely, and getting a glimpse of life, actually in the wilderness, this holiday was an important one to the Barina and the nurse as the first outing of the worshipful baby, who condescendingly allowed himself to be dressed out for the occasion. It was not

without considerable ceremony that the nurse and her charge were established in the carriage. If crosses made any discernible impression on the recipients the baby and the Nyannia herself—the carriage—the horses and the coachman, would all have been marked like a check tartan. A serious affair, this first outing! An event requiring very



particular attention from several saints of the highest respectability! A function on whose safe and happy conclusion a large amount of saintly honour and future supply of thanksgiving candles depended!

Negotiations having been satisfactorily concluded, the rest of us took our places in the consecrated chariot and we left the town, crossing the shining

Dnieper by the beautiful suspension bridge, and taking our way over the flat country, in a north-westerly direction.

Our way lay through several small villages, and in each the little bazaar was in full swing, the town hum and bustle being reproduced in miniature, and the people in their bright holiday attire making brilliant groups and dots of colour everywhere. For thirteen versts we drove along the rough highway between immense fields of grain and sunflowers, the latter a magnificent blaze of yellow and green which, painted into a picture, would throw a whole roomful of our quiet landscapes into the shade. The seeds of the sunflower yield an oil used for food, besides supplying the peasants with material for chewing, a habit they are much given to.

The grain seems to be a very heavy crop, but I am told it does not give the return appearances would lead one to expect. Whether from climatic reasons or bad husbandry, I cannot say, but Russian grain requires a process of cleansing by special machinery, before it is ready for the market. All along the road we met clumsy, springless, bullock carts, crawling along at a leisurely pace, many of them bearing loads of hay that would scarcely serve as one good feed for a horse. I pitied the poor men, and thought it very hard that they should have to work on Sunday while so many of their fellows were holiday making, but the Barin assured me that it was not a matter of necessity. "The men," he said, "had probably fallen in with friends and spent the previous day at some village or

perhaps had fallen asleep by the way and lost count of a day altogether."

Windmills, those common objects in Continental landscapes, were thickly scattered about. One gets tired of these awkward sprawling things, sticking out their gaunt arms against the sky, unrelieved by the hilly background we are used to, and all exactly alike. We came at length to a point where the road had to be left, and struck out across country without any apparent guide for the direction.

I should think it would be impossible to travel in this way by night if there were no moon. There was no indication of a path—no houses, no telegraph posts, no sign of civilization whatever—for two miles, from where we left the highway, until we arrived at our destination.

Townspeople who go to sojourn in those Datchas during the hot months are quite cut off from human intercourse and must have their principal means of support within their own boundaries.

Without railway, without post, without carriers or communication of any kind, the Datcha is a paradise for those who love limitless space, unbroken quiet, and utter loneliness, but for town-bred people who are used to bustle and like a little social companionship, Datcha-life becomes an insufferable drag, and unless they can secure a constant supply of visitors, the changeless sameness of the existence, without occupation, must be unutterably wearisome.

This, I have been assured by an Englishman who had tried it, is actually the effect of living in a Datcha with a Russian family. A family or party of

English people in such a natural paradise would thoroughly enjoy themselves because they would provide employment for body and mind in outdoor sport and indoor reading and recreation, but Russians have not taken to such ways as yet, and simply vegetate.

Many of those country houses are owned by persons of title who let them furnished for the summer, but their ideas of furnishing have to be seen to be believed.

I heard several rare tales about mansions, which, although guaranteed well-furnished by people of rank, whom one would expect to find at least decently lodged, turned out mere "Castles in Spain" so far as furniture went, and were found to contain not even the barest necessaries of civilised existence.

A lady told me of one she rented from a Baroness on the understanding that it was fully provided with every requisite. Full of expectation of a summer of ease and luxury, she left the madding crowd far behind and went to take possession. A rather rude awakening was in store for her. The house actually looked as if the last owner had moved out and taken away everything of value, leaving only rubbish not worth removing.

One cup, two glasses, and one saucepan comprised the whole contents of kitchen and china closet.* The lady was horrified, but helpless. She

* This state of things in the kitchen would probably be unknown to the owner of the house. A Russian lady seldom or never enters the kitchen, and it is not uncommon to find after a cook has been dismissed that the cooking utensils have been

was too far from home to supply deficiences, and the articles named had to serve all the purposes of cooking and table service. The bedrooms were found to be furnished on the same scale of magnificence, and my friend, instead of spending the summer in the lap of luxury, very much outdid the housekeeping feats of Robinson Crusoe.

In many cases the house is found to be in such a state that camping out is necessary until a complete overhaul and cleaning has been gone through.

The Datcha for which we were bound belonged to the lady whose hospitality we had accepted, and we were sure of a welcome to a house replete with all the comfort one could desire.

While driving on to nowhere, as it seemed to me, like children trying to reach the end of a rainbow, we noticed a cloud of dust some distance behind us. The cloud grew bigger, and presently a carriage, driven at furious speed, emerged from the dust, and came thundering along directly in our tracks.

We could soon perceive the occupant, a Russian officer, standing up in the carriage and urging the coachman to greater efforts. My heart stood still for a moment, as all the tales of Russian officialism rushed into my mind.

I anxiously asked the Barin if he had his papers with him, and if any of us had been doing anything unlawful.

disposed of to such an extent that the production of a meal with what is left would be a problem no British cook could face.

"Nonsense," said the Barin.

"Perhaps you've been seen taking notes," remarked the Barina, mischievously, "but I hope they wont send *us* to Siberia on your account."

In spite of the assurances of the two B's, I could see that both kept serious eyes on the approaching vehicle.

Presently it dashed up with its horses panting and coachman shouting, like a post-boy in chase of a runaway couple in the old posting days of England.

Then, as I had reached an uncomfortably strained state of nervous excitement, the carriage came abreast of us, the officer indulged in a good all round stare, saluted, and sat down.

The whole romance was knocked into a cocked hat. The action of the officer—whom we afterwards met at dinner—was simply the outcome of the insatiable Russian curiosity.

We arrived soon after and found the Datcha a splendid place, resembling nothing I had ever seen, but looking just like all the descriptions I have read of West Indian plantations.

The house and garden were partly surrounded by dense woods, and fields of hops took the place of sugar-cane.

The dresses of the servants and field-workers helped to bear out the plantation idea, being the lightest covering the rules of civilization would permit, but our welcome was more delightfully striking than anything I had ever experienced.

The whole family and visitors turned out to meet

us, while the servants, headed by the aged Nyannia, who had been nurse to every member of the family, gathered in the doorway.

As we alighted, however, they all withdrew like good superstitious Russians, and only when we



were fairly under the roof, were welcoming hands extended to us.

The old nurse was evidently very proud of being able to say, "How de doo, Barishna, how de doo, how de doo," as she kissed my hand. The reverend-looking old body had been in London once with the family, and came back a linguist to this extent, and no doubt ranked high in the estimation

of her fellows on account of her travels and accomplishments.

Luncheon followed soon after our arrival, and I had my first experience of a meal *a la Russe,* and in almost exclusively Russian Society.

English manners were studied to some extent at this house, however, and it was not until afterwards that I had a chance of seeing the genuine, unadulterated Russe feeding himself. After doing so I no longer wonder at the ignorance of Russian servants as to table arrangements, and the dinner requisites indispensable to English people, nor did I think it. strange that even refined Russians, new to English ways, should remark, "You English *do* eat *so* prettily."

Some of their ways are comical, but a good many of them rather disgusting both to ear and eye.

One plate is quite sufficient for a Russian during a meal, no matter how many courses he may partake of, or how different one may be from the other.

The zakuska, or preliminary meal, described elsewhere, is partaken of so heartily by natives that we would feel amply satisfied without tasting the feast it merely paves the way for.

Borsht, the national soup—*the dinner* of the poor —forms a dish on every table. The Emperor himself partakes of borsht and black bread. It is a strong soup, made of all kinds of vegetables, tomatoes giving it their colour, and sour cream and vinegar giving it a piquant flavour. I took a few spoonfuls, out of politeness, but although English palates are said to appreciate it after a few trials,

borsht is an acquired taste, and its sourness was too much for me.

I was much amused by the manners, or, to our notion, the want of them, exhibited by Russian visitors at dinner. One gentleman's plate was never empty, because if he saw any tit-bit on a dish which was being carried past him, he made a dab at it with his fork, and added it to what he had before him. Thus he would add a piece of apple-tart to roast meat and gravy, or, engaged on a bit of boiled fowl, his eye would light on an attractive ice, and he would absorb that. His method of handling his knife and fork were something to make one's flesh creep. Grasping the knife in the way that a stage murderer clutches a dagger, he stabbed the meat with it, and tore away pieces with the fork held in the same awkward fashion. These little ways were not peculiar to himself, others were feeding themselves much in the same way, without considering troublesome elegancies at all. A lady, for instance, would pick up the leg of a chicken, and, planting her elbows comfortably on the table, gnaw the meat from the bone at her ease.

On the whole, the freedom from anything approaching to refinement or delicacy in eating at a Russian table, is such as would not be found at the humblest board in our country. The meal is always accompanied with wine, finished with coffee and liqueurs, and good digestion invoked afterwards with cigarettes by both ladies and gentlemen.

I *might* survive one such dinner, eating,

drinking, and smoking, in follow-my-leader style, with a Russian, but I think it highly improbable. I should prefer an easier death. While on this subject, I might give an instance of Russian manners, which will hardly be believed by those who have never seen untravelled Russians at home, but will not surprise the experienced. Among the few Englishmen in Kieff are the British military officers who go there for a few months to study the language, and, in order to get tuition and conversation, board, or, as they say, "pig it," with Russian families. Two of these gentlemen, calling on us one evening, told us they had had to go dinnerless that day on account of the conduct of their "beast" of a landlord. Much to our amusement, they described how he had torn a handful out of the loaf, with not over-clean fingers, and invited them to help themselves to bread. They both abstained from bread. Then the soup tureen was placed before their host.

"What's this! fish soup?" said he, and grabbing at a floating sprat with finger and thumb, he pulled the flesh from it with his teeth, *and threw the bone back into the tureen.*

"Gentlemen, will you take some soup?"

But neither of the gentlemen wanted soup, indeed they seemed to have lost their appetites altogether somehow. Some people are so particular about trifles.

. . . . . .

We were glad to leave the gentlemen to their talk and get outside to look about us, and willingly

agreed to the proposal to spend an hour on the cool lake in front of the house.

We got into the boat and had a delicious time gliding among the water lilies till the oarsmen got tired, and some lady suggested a dip in the cool water. Nothing could be more to our taste, but my sister and I "would have to trouble the hostess for bathing dresses."

"Bathing dresses!"

If we had requested to be accommodated with wings, we could not have caused more of a flutter.

"Bathing dresses! Why, who ever heard of anyone bathing in clothes?"

"Well, we had," we almost blushed to mention it, but we could not remember the time when we had bathed in open water *without* dresses."

"Good heavens! what a custom, truly the English had peculiar ways. Are we not all made in the same mould? Why should we be ashamed to bathe together as nature made us?"

We did not argue the matter. Possibly we were rather antiquated in our notions, but we had been brought up that way, and couldn't feel comfortable splashing about in shallow water like so many figures from a Hans Makart picture, and begged to be excused.

The rest of the ladies bathed and enjoyed it. We afterwards learned that the lake was the sole source of the domestic water supply!

The entire establishment probably bathed in it every day!

I don't think I mentioned that I drank a good

deal of water at luncheon! I think it was unkind of the Barina to remind me of the fact.

A moonlight visit to the woods was suggested after dinner, and we should have been delighted, but our time would not allow of it. We were far from home, and the approaching darkness warned us that the hour for departure was at hand. We could have spent a few days on the beautiful estate with great pleasure. One would not soon tire of rambling in a forest where everything was just as generous nature had made it; a rich and novel experience for us, used to thin woods surrounded by walls or palings to keep the cows out, filled with covers to protect the pheasants, and provided with notice boards to warn common humanity of dreadful penalties in store for such as dared set foot within the shady groves.

That drive home was a subject for a poem. The burning sun and dust had made even driving uncomfortable on the way out, but now the air was deliciously pleasant. The full moon gave a soft beauty to every common object, and the groups of holiday folks returning from a day's outing, breaking out occasionally into song and laughter as they trudged along, made the whole journey seem like a dream to me.

The view became glorious when the silvered river came in sight with the hills of Kieff rising behind. The dark masses of foliage threw the white houses into strong relief in the moonlight, and the valley between glittered and flashed with lights as if set with precious stones. There were illumina-

tions in honour of the Empress as well as the ordinary lights of the town, and the dome of St. Marie's Church rose conspicuously out of the shadows, beautified with tier on tier of shining stars in honour of its Royal patron.

But presently a brighter illumination makes its appearance and gradually throws all the others into the shade. A red glow rises from the part of the town lying in deepest shadow, and is reflected from a cloud of smoke hanging in the still air above it.

Fire!

Three times since I have been here has the same glow reddened the night sky. The wooden buildings are as dry as tinder, and the people have no means of overcoming the element if it gets a good hold. Nothing can be done but protect surrounding property. The Fire Fiend laughs at their puny efforts to stay his progress and in spite of an active fire brigade, a wooden house, in which fire has broken out, is almost certain to burn to the ground

The Governor is very proud of his fire brigade for all that, and parades it before the admiring eyes of every distinguished stranger. There are several watch towers at different points from whence ever-watchful sentries can immediately report an outbreak. The men can go through their drill and quench an imaginary conflagration with marvellous smartness. But when a fire *does* break out! Ho, Ho!! the fiasco would make Captain Shaw die of laughing! The sentry promptly gives the alarm. The beautifully trained brigade turns out like clock-

work and flies to the rescue " with many a whoop and hollo.' That's all right. But when the "engines" heave in sight—half a dozen common clumsy carts bumping and rumbling over the stones, each bearing a common cask filled with water, and a hand pump to suit, the climax of absurdity is reached.

The authorities have at length awakened to the knowledge that their system has something wanting about it somewhere.

A tremendous blaze, costing two hundred thousand roubles, let some light into their rather slow-moving intellects a week or two ago, and inquiry revealed the fact that the rest of the world had better contrivances than water carts, and still had to drill men to do desperate battle with the overwhelming element.

They have now decided to spend £400 on a real fire engine, and after that is provided, if the model fire brigade don't happen to be asleep when fire breaks out, or run away and forget the engine, or stop half-way to exhibit its beauty to the curious people, or ignore the fact that a fire engine needs water—well, we shall see what we shall see.



CHAPTER XII.

Justice—Russian Officials—A Case about a Dog—Bribery and Corruption—Peculiar Laws—Depravity of Russian Children—A Russian Mother's Ideas of Responsibility—The Passport Nuisance—A True John Bull—How Russian Officials get their Living—Russian Jews.



THE ways of Russian officials are strange, and their ideas of Justice quite beyond the power of the British understanding. Bribery seems to be the only sure way to obtain anything approaching to justice, in the lower courts at least. No man, even with a perfectly just and clear case, omitting this precaution on principle, can count on the aid of the law with any chance of fair play, against an unprincipled person, whose easy morality allows him to buy a few witnesses or bribe a policeman or two.

A gentleman gave me his own experience of

justice as he had found it quite recently. It was all about a dog fight. This gentleman's dog happened to meet another dog on the warpath, and the two had a pitched battle, resulting in a victory to the narrator's dog. The matter might have ended there if the owner of the vanquished dog had not shared the nature of his pet, and taken the other animal's place when it found itself mastered and went home. The brutal Russe who owned the beaten dog, unable to brook the defeat, attacked the victor with a club, knocked out two of its teeth, broke some of its ribs, and left it for dead.

Such brutality could not be tolerated, and the gentleman handed the case to the police. About a week afterwards a policeman called to see the dog, which had meanwhile been carefully nursed, and was on the way to recovery.

After some time a report of the trial appeared in the papers, *the plaintiff having had no notice that the case was coming on.* "The defendant was dismissed," said the report, "he having proved, by evidence of the plaintiff's own cook, that he (the defendant) had only protected his own dog from maltreatment."

The plaintiff's own cook had never been out of the house on the day of the trial, but some other woman had obligingly perjured herself for a few copecks or a glass of vodka.

There are some very thoughtful and merciful laws in existence here, too, if the loose morality* of the people in general did not lead to their abuse.

* The laxity referred to here is of a commercial kind. Rus-

For instance a tenant cannot be ejected from a house, however objectionable he may be, without three months' notice to quit being given. Should the term of notice expire in the winter season, the tenant may refuse to go, and the law will protect him from being turned out in the cold.

Again. If one should catch a boy pillaging his fruit trees, or playing mischief of any kind on his premises, he must not box the young rascal's ears, or give him a good shaking, as one would do in England. If the victim of juvenile depravity should so far forget himself as to lay a finger on the sacred person of Russian youth he is liable to imprisonment for three days, without the option of a fine.

The man who wishes to protect his property must hand the boy over to the police, who will probably punish him much more severely than the nature of the crime calls for.

The boys pillage our garden unmercifully and with impunity because few Britons could bear the thought of introducing an erring youngster to the horrors of a Russian prison for a boyish misdemeanour. We are, therefore, grievously tormented by constant raids on the plums and walnuts because the young scamps probably know the police will not be called in, and can defy us to dust their jackets.

The loose morality of the Russian is painfully

sians in general pay for nothing till they are forced to do so by the law. Law processes are countless, and the aid of the notary has to be appealed to in nearly all transactions of a business nature.

apparent in everything. Nor is it to be wondered at, when the ways of the children are observed. "Spare the rod, and spoil the child," is an unknown proverb.

The children are left to the freedom of their own wills at an unduly early age and the result is lamentably plain.

"God made my children and gave them their instincts," said a Russian mother to an English governess who ventured to suggest a little wholesome correction. "Will He not also direct them aright?"

A very easy way to get rid of the responsibilities of maternity and place on the shoulders of Providence the entire charge of the family!

"But if God made such imps," continued the governess, who has had long and trying experience, "quite a different kind of spirit must have the direction of their instincts. They are not children, they are devils."

The want of pure home life and its invaluable influence (as evidenced by those most beautiful traits in well brought up British children,—shy modesty and simple innocence) added to the bad example of their elders, and the freedom of speech, common even among people who pride themselves on their refinement, would alone account for the prevalent juvenile depravity.

But the evil is worse in the children who are not educated at home.

The public schools—according to the unanimous opinion of the English residents—are conducted on

very lax principles, and the prevailing abomination—immodesty! is rampant there.

Taking their upbringing into consideration, it is not to be expected that Russian children should develop into strong minded, well principled men and women, or that social life in Russia could be anything but impure.

But to get back to justice. An English governess, who has been here for many years, was lately notified by the authorities that she must provide herself with a new passport.

Knowing "their's not to make reply" to Russian authority, she obediently applied to the English Consul, who tore the old passport from its binding and substituted the new.

The lady presented the new passport, and was asked in a very threatening manner who had *dared* to remove the old one, and being utterly confused and unable to understand the charge, or to explain herself in Russian, she was thereupon summoned to court.

The lady's annoyance may be imagined, an annoyance not unmixed with dread, since a charge may be easily trumped up against one who does not know the language, and all she could say in answer to the magistrate's questions was "Angleechahnka nee poneemyie" (Englishwoman does not understand). The case went on until, in answer to a direct question, the policeman who had hunted down this criminal had to admit that the Consul had made the substitution of passports, on which the magistrate berated him soundly, and sent him to explain matters

to the Consul and apologize to the lady through him.

This he did by saying, he knew he had no case against the lady, but there were so many policemen, and they had so little to do, that if they did not make work occasionally, they would never get on. Comment needless—as usual!

The passport system is an endless source of worry to the pilgrim. The passport has to be given up within two days of the stranger's arrival, so that his name and description may be entered in the police books. The passport and all other papers attesting respectability have to be constantly carried about if one would be prepared for emergencies, and the native or foreigner wishing to leave, has to present his passport, and ask permission to go. If without influence, the traveller may be delayed beyond all patience, kept calling day after day without satisfaction, and bothered half out of his wits, before he can get his papers out of the authorities' hands, and be at liberty to leave the country.

Some time ago a stupid Englishman living in the European Hotel refused to give up his passport—said he had shown it at the frontier, and what more did they want? The gorodovor* "wanted his passport; the authorities had to enter him in the police books."

"Oh! they had, eh?" said John Bull. "Like their confounded impudence! They shan't though! Get out!"

Gorodovor got out, and the authorities sent an

* Policeman.

interpreter to explain the law of the country, and state that the Englishman could not stay in it, unless he conformed to the customs. "Very good," says John Bull; "you shan't have the passport, so there! The country, and the customs, and the authorities, and the policemen may all be confounded."

The authorities then intimated that Mr. Bull must "get out," and he was politely ejected forthwith, because he was "English, ye know," and "would not budge from his principles for any confounded Russian, mark that!"

No hotel-keeper dare harbour such an offender. If he does, he is fined for the first two offences, and loses his licence for the third.

To the Russian Government servant, the portion of the people coming under his authority do not appear as a public to be served, but as a body to be repressed, dictated to, and made to yield, by every means in the official's power, the money required for his support. The oppressors themselves acknowledge this in moments of social confidence, and cannot be got to believe that official honesty exists in the world.

"What!" said a young Russian, holding a place of authority, to my host on one occasion, "do you mean to say your officials accept no bribes?"

"Certainly I do," replied the Barin. "They are paid for their services, and would be dismissed if found accepting bribes of any kind."

"Ah! they are paid, that is different! Still, I cannot believe your civil officers can be such fools.

Our pay would not keep roofs over our heads, but the perquisites keep us in luxury."

The Jews are probably the greatest sufferers from the rapacity of Government servants, but only in the first instance. They take it out of the peasant with interest. There is no doubt that the Government treats the Jews harshly, but the Government has no consideration even for the rights of the natives of the country. It would be strange indeed if Russian authority should give to the most detested of aliens favours which are denied to the millions of humble working people who are still little better than serfs. Yet this is simply what some English philanthropists, guided by the representations of certain newspapers, are claiming for the Israelite at present. No one who has not observed the Russian Jew at close quarters and learned something of his despicable ways could believe to what an intolerable extent he carries out the unscrupulous knaveries which seem to be inherent in his nature. The Jews are middlemen in everything. They are lawyers, property factors, grain and produce brokers, spirit dealers and commission agents, but in everything they are cheats, and "spoilers of the Egyptians," who would be very glad indeed to "let the people go."*

The Israelites are as little liked by other foreigners

* Owing to the sensation got up lately by the *Times*, England is now threatened with a Russian-Jewish invasion. My friends assure me that the Jews are quite in a flutter over the sympathy expressed by Britain, and want to see that happy Canaan, whose people express so much love for them. Alas! poor England!

in Russia—English included—as by their so-called persecutors. The mean, sneaking Jew makes no friends, lives apart, worships his own God, eats with no one, does not intermarry, mixes in no society unless for a selfish purpose. If he be heartily disliked, who is to blame? It is impossible for an honest Briton to view the thousand-and-one ways made use of by the Jew to victimize the innocent, simple-hearted Russian peasant with anything but disgust, or to wonder that the ignorant and excitable lower classes, having the resources of the law blocked by the ready bribes of wealthy Jews, should break forth in fury at times, and wreak a terrible vengeance on the conscienceless robbers who betray the fathers and devour the children's bread.



CHAPTER XIII.

The Czar's Name-Day—Service in the Church of St. Sophia—Native and Foreign Dignitaries Turn Out to Honour the Czar—Mass by the Metropoleet—The Pilgrim is Again Impressed by Solemn Scene—Another Downfall—A Crimped and Scented Minister—Our Consul—A Glorious Progress—The Kieff Opera House—The Opera—Russian Encores—Illuminations—Decorations by Order—A Daring Lady—Sey-Tchass—Some Funny Ways of the People—The Working Man at his Toil.



ANOTHER holiday and "anither het day, Kornel," as the raw ensign remarked on the second day of his experience of Indian service. "Het" days are too common to be noticed now, unless to remark that the heat has passed the average and it still seems to get hotter, and holidays are becoming almost monotonous. The 30th of August is the Czar's name-day, and one of the most important holidays of the year. There was a grand service

in honour of the event in the church of St. Sophia, where, in addition to the most magnificent ecclesiastical display within the power of the Church, the civil and military officers of the Government, and the representatives of all the foreign powers, appeared in full regalia to do honour to the great autocrat.

A party of us having arranged to go to church, met at nine in the morning, thinking by going thus early we should be sure to secure good places; but a great many more people had been struck with the same idea, and the church was full when we arrived. We mounted to the gallery to find the places all taken up there also; but room was found for me behind a short peasant woman, with an aroma of garlic about her which would have served two of her size, and I was able to see what was being done on a portion of the floor below. There is never anything but "standing room" in a Russian church. There are no seats, and although some go and come during all the time worship is going on, the greater portion stand out the whole service, a matter of three hours.

This was a very trying thing to us, and would never do under the English system of listening in motionless stillness to sermon and prayers. But the constant exercises entailed on the Russian devotee of bowing, crossing, kneeling, and prostrating, together with their absorbed attention to the ritual, will no doubt ward off the feeling of intense fatigue which, in our case, became painful before the service was half over. The greater por-

tion of the space was, as usual, a painter's dream of glowing colour, due to the many-hued dresses of the commoners. A space in front was taken up by better-class people, and their ordinary European garb formed a pleasant middle-tint between the warm body of colour behind and the black robes of the nuns and monks who were grouped on either side of the altar, they in turn throwing the gorgeous dresses of the priests into striking relief. The priests wore their most costly vestments, surmounted by the velvet hat—which resembles nothing so much as an inverted muff-box.

The choir was chanting beautifully when we entered, but soon after, a sudden hush fell upon the vast assembly, and all the worshippers bowed to the ground. The Metropoleet had entered, and now stood before the congregation, clad in robes of royal purple, his white hair and beard flowing down over his shoulders and breast, his trembling hands raised aloft to invoke a blessing on the rites about to be performed. I could not wonder at the simple believers, bending humbly to receive the benediction of this reverend old man. The head of the church is eighty-six years old, and of a most benign expression of countenance; and as he stood before the altar, blessing the people, he was a figure to command reverence from the most indifferent. To the devotee he is something far above common humanity—a being who has a heavenly virtue in his touch, whose garments are endued with healing power, and the place whereon he stands is holy ground.

Presently four high priests advanced to disrobe him, and replace the purple with the highest trappings of his office. One receives his hat on a silver tray, others bear away his robes on a white silk mattress, and leave him for a time arrayed in a spotless white ephod. In performing this service the priests attested the saintly superiority of their chief by kissing his hand every time they touched him. Then, having put on his magnificent apparel, they crowned him with a rich crown of gold blazing with jewels, and led him forward towards the centre of the church.

This was out of our range of vision, so we descended and made our way forward; and, being respectable-looking, we were allowed to pass on to the front.

The Metropoleet had meanwhile been enthroned on a raised tapestried seat on a dais facing the altar, and we were just in time to see the altar-doors thrown open, disclosing the Sacramental table, with its dazzling garnishings of gold and silver dishes, all formed in exact imitation of the vessels used in the tabernacle of the wilderness.

From my new position close to the dais I could see everything, and had the gorgeous array of Russian civil and military dignitaries, and the representatives of foreign powers just opposite. The uniforms were nearly all gaudy, blazing with orders * and gold lace. The quiet dignified

* Orders are so plentiful that they form no guide to rank or merit. A soldier who has never seen a battlefield may present as splendid a front as a jeweller's window.

British dark blue and silver seemed to me the most tasteful there, and the Consul was rendered more conspicuous by being placed between the red facings of the German representative and the flaming decorations of a native officer.

The preliminaries having been gone through, the high mass began. Four crowned priests took their places besides the Metropoleet on the daïs, and a number of little boys dressed in cloth of gold followed the priests, one bearing a great book, the others holding candles in large golden candlesticks.

One little fellow seemed scarcely able to bear the weight of the candlestick entrusted to him, and toddled after the Metropoleet as he advanced and retired between the altar and the daïs as if ready to drop under his burden of riches. As the impressive service went on I could not help being carried away by the enthralling power of the music, the infectious adoration of the worshippers, and the fatherly influence of the aged minister, evidently so sincere in all he did, and so simply good and gracious in his bearing as he now and again turned to bless the adoring throng.

Nor was I the only one of our party who, though too long used to a plain form of worship to look upon the ritual in a truly religious spirit, was affected by it.

The friend whose sensibilities had been wrought upon in the same manner at the Lavra service was close by, and I could see he was as much impressed as myself. But we were not to be allowed to forget the sensuous, superficial nature of those elaborate

rites, or to carry away even respect for Greek church ceremonial, seen at its best. We were rudely disillusioned once more. It happened in this way. Two crowned priests took their places on right and left of the Metropoleet, to support and assist him in his genuflections and prostrations before the altar. The tableaux reminded us of Moses supported by Aaron and Hur on the hill-top on that day of Israelitish victory, and the whole service profited by the association; but not for long. One of the priests, released for a time by a cessation in the archbishop's part of the service, calmly drew a black comb from his cloth of gold pocket, and began—oh, shade of Beau Brummel!—to re-arrange his hair, which I then, for the first time, noticed was *frizzed* like a school-girl's. Down came my uplifted soul again with a decisive shock. I looked at my impressible companion, and found that deep disgust had taken the place of an expression very like rapture suffusing his face a moment before; but the disgust quickly gave way to amusement, and he whispered, "Another eye-opener! We came to see the performance of Greek ritual in its highest functions, and we get a clerical clown thrown in, who does up his back hair before the audience. Wait a bit! perhaps this creature will oblige with a chant sung with his mouth full of hairpins."

The solemn absurdities had no longer any interest for me. A religious service which could admit of so wretched an exhibition of earthly vanity on the part of a priest on the very altar steps, was

too contemptible to sustain further attention, even as a show. I felt at that moment a pride in belonging to a Presbyterian sect, whose services, whatever objection may be taken to them, are dignified in their plainness, and never marred by unmanly behaviour, or destroyed by a display of personal vanity on the part of its ministers.

The service was brought to an end at last by the singing of the *Te Deum*, and as the true believers crowded round the daïs eager to kiss the hands of the Metropoleet, or even touch the hem of his garment, we made our way out, glad to be released from the stifling heat and the overpowering fumes of incense within the building.

The carriages of the great were waiting outside, and I was accommodated with a seat in the coach of the blue and silver dignitary before mentioned, and a share of the honour, real or pretended, paid to the British Lion.

No one who has not seen it can have any idea of the influence of the cocked hat in Russia. That progress through the gaily decorated streets was like a leaf from the history of Cinderella, or half an hour in the borrowed plumes of a popular princess. The soldiers and gendarmes saluted, the dressed people bowed, the commoners all uncovered and chin-chinned profoundly; and all I had to do was to sit up stiffly and look as if I were used to a little of that sort of thing taken as a tonic every day before dinner, and had as much right to it as the Mikado's "daughter-in-law-elect."

But I am afraid I did not look the part. One

would need to be seventh cousin to a head baillie, at least, to thoroughly enjoy this sort of thing, and I felt myself wishing it over, and I nobody in particular again.

. . . . . .

The opera house opened that night for the season, and we went to see a very popular piece called *A Life for the Czar.* The theatre is a good one, but too small for Kieff, and the reason for this is a good example of red-tapism in official Russia.

It happened that when the theatre was projected, the plans—as all such things have to be—were forwarded to St. Petersburg for approval at the same time as those of a much smaller town called Jitomir. Both were passed; but the plans for the Kieff theatre—a house of large dimensions, fitted with electric light and all the latest improvements—were sent by mistake to Jitomir, while Kieff got the small theatre, and had to build it. There is no resource in such cases. To make the exchange the Government would have had to acknowledge the possibility of its making a mistake, which, of course, is too absurd to be thought of.

The opera in Kieff is within the reach of all. Admission may be had for a few copecks—a good seat costs only 8d., and students and others connected with schools get in at half-price.

The first item on the bill was the singing of the National Anthem by the whole company. This was rapturously encored and repeated three times over.

The opera was selected specially for the occasion, and is founded on facts which happened in the sixteenth century. The reigning Czar was in bad repute among the Poles, and they determined to assassinate him. A party of the malcontents are told off to track the Czar to a monastery, where, hearing of the plot against him, he has taken refuge. They do so, but lose the trail at a small village. Knowing they are not far off the scent, the assassins seize an aged inhabitant, and command him to lead them to the Czar's hiding-place on pain of death.

The peasant stubbornly refuses.

They try bribery, and show their determination to attain their end so plainly, that the old peasant pretends to give way; and after a touching farewell to his son and daughter, bids his son carry the news to the monastery, and also to the nearest military station.

Then declaring himself ready to do the will of the avengers, he leads them into a morass and shares death with them, rather than betray his ruler.

In recognition of the heroic act, the village the peasant belonged to has been free from all taxation ever since, and the inhabitants are still known as "the white people."

During the progress of the opera we were introduced to a faithful reproduction of the Polish court, and witnessed a real mazurka beautifully danced.

The singing was by no means so commendable, the principal tenor doing his part in a perfect

screech; but the audience was easily pleased, and rewarded his efforts with tumultuous cries of "*Beesh!*" "*Beesh!*" * and everything had to be sung three times over, in spite of the hisses of a critical few.

Our Russian handy guide and genial interpreter, who shared our box, and conducted us through the mazes of the plot, was much put out by the screechy tenor.

"Hear him!" he cried. "What a voice! He screams! he cannot sing! and"—with a comical emphasis—"*he is* A JEW!—hiss—s—s!"

It was very pleasant to sit in this little theatre and observe the people gathered there. There appeared to be no restrictions as to dress, but in most cases the ladies were in very full—which, of course, means very scanty—evening dress, and diamonds glittered everywhere.

Our interpreter remarked smilingly that the stones might not all bear close scrutiny, but, in explanation of their plentifulness, said that among the well-to-do a bride got nothing else in the way of wedding gifts. No useful articles were ever given, as is the custom with us; but, though often —with true Russian prodigality—going beyond their means to do so, the relations on both sides showered personal ornaments of this kind on the girls.

I can never get used to the smoking customs of the ladies here. In the cloak-room the demand was not for pins or help to undo wraps or arrange dresses—the calls were all for lights! and the

* Encore.

attendants were kept busy running hither and thither with tapers to light the ladies' cigarettes, and few were to be seen without a glowing rollette of tobacco between their lips, or held by their white fingers.

The waits between the acts were long, but were rendered pleasant by chatter, as nearly all our friends were present, and our box was crowded with visitors every time the drop-scene came down. Before we left, the appreciative audience had brought the players *six* times before the curtain to bow their acknowledgments, and still the cries of beesh! beesh! rang out in deafening volume, and the people showed no sign of leaving off. Mr. Novikoff said the management would let them beesh! away for a reasonable time, and then turn the lights out as a hint that it was time to go home, and they would have to "squeegsh" out in the dark.

The town was gay with illumination that night, and from the higher ground the straight lines of star-like lights in the principal streets and the circles of glowing lamps round the domes had a charming effect. The daylight decorations were fine enough but rather monotonous. Such things are not left to individual taste in Russia. Authority leaves nothing to spontaneous loyalty. It calculates the amount of enthusiasm required for the occasion, selects the colours, and orders the people to display—at their own expense—so many yards of love and gratitude for the blessings of monarchy, in the shape of flags.

In this instance the display consisted of three red, blue, and white flags on each building.

At the last tour of the Shah of Persia through Europe he was expected to visit Kieff, and put up at the Imperial Palace.

The house-owners were duly commanded to provide each three purple and yellow flags to be exhibited in honour of the Shah on a date to be afterwards announced. The date was never announced, because the Shah did not turn up, and the expense was all thrown away, as the Persian monarch is not likely to give the citizens another chance to break out in a yellow fever of rejoicing on his account.

A Russian lady-householder, whose acquaintance I made, had had her decorations all ready according to order, and was so much incensed at being taken in, that she determined to wear out those flags on all and sundry, whatever authority had to say about it. Next holiday three sickly banners waved from her windows in jarring contrast to the prevailing uniformity, and in spite of Governmental directions as to colour.

Authority was mildly astonished and said so. Another holiday, and again Madame Garoski flaunted her purple and yellow, like a melancholy signal on a cholera-stricken ship, under the governor's very nose.

Authority was scandalized, and sent severe notice of the fact.

Birthdays and thanksgivings happened to follow each other pretty closely about that time, but Barina

Garoski saluted them all in the same manner, and rejoiced in sad but conspicuous purple and yellow, for nobody else ventured to disobey orders.

Authority waxed wroth and threatened, but still the purple and yellow waved ostentatiously in the breeze,

Authority got mad and tore its hair over those abominable decorations. It had never been so flouted before. It couldn't stand it. Such depravity had never been heard of in Kieff. It was a horrible plague this purple and yellow. People couldn't see the beauty of the other arrangements of the whole street for this glaring Philistinism. Madame Garoski had better look to it and see that the coming thanksgiving for the recovery of the Czar's favourite General's wife's sister's cousin-german's father-in-law from a bad cold in the head, was properly recognized in red and blue.

The day came, and the daring Philistine gave thanks in purple and yellow—" three in a dose, as before."

Then authority climbed down, and sent high official personage to beg—to implore—that the Persian sickness be taken away, and the Barina, having had her money's worth out of the offending bunting, gave in, and artistic harmony reigned again.

. . . . . .

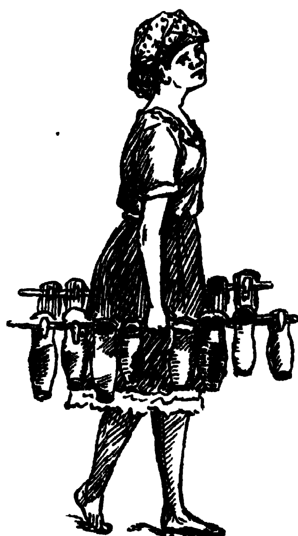
" Sey-tchass ! Barina ; sey-tchass ! that is to say, immediately ! immediately ! ! "

The Barina has commanded me to stop writing on pain of having the ink hidden away for a week, so I shall have to cut this letter short.

"Sey-tchass!" is the universal reply to every demand, but the meaning expressed by the term "immediately!" with us, has no significance to the Russian mind.

It may mean in half an hour, half a day, next week, Tuesday fortnight, or next Christmas.

"Sey-tchass! Barishna!" cries the handmaid in



reply to a call for a jug of water, and I wait by the washstand till I am tired standing, and then sit down and wait till I am tired sitting, and then call again.

"Sey-tchass! Barishna! Sey-tcha——!" comes a drowsy reply from the corridor.

I wait some time longer, and then go to see about it, and nearly tumble over a heap of girl slumbering peacefully outside the door.

"When are you going to take these stones off my doorstep?" demands the Barin, as he scales a barricade of building material to get out in the morning.

"Sey-tchass! Barin! oh, sey-tchass!" replies the workman, and goes to see about it, but the Barin has to scale the same outworks to get into his castle at night.



"Your order will be executed immediately, nobly born," writes the merchant, but that is only his pleasant way of putting it; your order may not be executed for a month.

It is the same in everything,—never do to-day what you can put off till to-morrow. If you meet a man going on a business visit by train, and propose a supper in a garden instead, it is ten to one he will go with you and put off his business.

Stop one on the way to pay a debt, and he will possibly dawdle half a day with you and spend a good portion of the money in drinks.

The carter who should have arrived with his load for the building outside, at mid day perhaps, turns up at mid night, and nearly scares us out of our senses with a mimic earthquake of tumbling bricks, and tramp of stumbling bullocks, simply because he has fallen in with an acquaintance on the way, and passed the day in brotherly love and beer and skittles.

The Russian can put off anything : his breakfast, his sleep, his appointment with a rich uncle, his wedding—his gravest responsibilities.

" Sey-tchass ! sey-tchass ! but, in the name of goodness, don't be in a hurry ; it will do as well to-morrow. You foreigners would chase the life out of a body."

There go those workmen again trying to get a log to " hoy " itself, whatever that means. I saw them at it yesterday, and admired their scientific way of going to work, especially as no one could have taught these simple fellows anything about conservation of energy.

As many men as can get a hand on the log put one there, and the other hand on their neighbour's shoulder. Then they all say *Hoy !*

The log pays no attention to the remark, so the men take their hands off, and chat a little, and take a look at the scenery,

Then they get into position again and say *Hoy !* once more, but the log remains deaf to reason and does not move. This seems to call for

an interval for refreshments, so they all sit down on the log to keep it from "hoying" when they're not looking, and each one goes burrowing down to his boot tops for a bit of cucumber or a few sunflower seeds, or their little bag of tobacco. Then after they have eaten something, and made cigarettes and smoked them, they get up and form line and say *Hoy!* for the third time, and the log finding that something must be done, slowly gets up and moves off. Great, oh great, is the working man all over the earth!



CHAPTER XIV.

Last Days—Regrets—The Russians Approve of Scotch Reels—Sudden Fall in Temperature—Return of Society—Garden Sports and Social Evenings—The Pilgrim Becomes Pathetic.



THE end of the holiday is fast approaching. I am beginning to count the days and look forward mournfully to last romps with the baby, last visits to the bazaar, last afternoons in that delightful garden on the hill, where the din and rattle of the town come up in waves, with a sound like the murmur of the German Ocean as it breaks over the sandy beach of our own bathing-place.

A few more days and I must bid farewell to those pleasant mornings on the verandah, feeding the tame chicken which comes round regularly to claim a share of our breakfast—an impertinent familiarity viewed with great disfavour by the kitten, who looks

down on backyard company from its favourite position on the verandah rail, and in turn is looked up to with watchful jealousy by the big dog who lies blinking in the sun at the foot of the steps.

Those three domestie pets can never agree. The chicken has to keep a certain distance if it would enjoy its crumbs in comfort, but with the brainless forgetfulness of the domestic fowl, it invariably oversteps the line drawn by Kit. Beyond this line, backyard plebeianism must not impudently intrude itself on garden aristocracy. Once let the chicken cross the limit, the watchful Kitty swells out her tail and, with wrathful spit, springs down to punish such intolerable presumption, the jealous Brilliant jumps up, ostensibly to protect the weak, but really to wipe off a personal grudge against the furry favourite. The frightened rooster scuttles off with hysterical cackle, the kitten bolts after it in hot pursuit, the dog dashes at Kit's heels with angry bark, the Barina goes after Brilliant with the crowing baby, I follow the Barina, and my ball of wool brings up the rear bobbing and jumping among the shrubs and making a tangle which will take half an hour to undo.

The screaming soloist, at work on the building, stops as we swoop round the corner; the attention of his fellow-workmen is attracted to our movements, labour is suspended, and ten minutes are given to observe us, make cigarettes, and comment afresh on the eccentric doings of those Angliski.

The evening Scotch reel, an innovation instituted soon after my arrival, as an after-the-bath diversion,

for my nephew, will soon be short of a partner. This is an entertainment greatly appreciated by the heir. It must have awakened the inherent Scot within him. It certainly opened the way to the inner chamber of his affections, and gave me a place among his best beloved, equal, at least, to that of his godfather, who won his regard by tossing



him up and catching him again, lending him his watch to try the sword-swallowing trick with, and calling him "old man."

The reel was much admired by the workmen, a number of whom were spectators at its first performance. They can see all we do in the drawing-room, and the novel exhibition of an upright dance, with the accompanying "hoochs" quite tickled

their fancy. The first intimation we had of an audience was a series of wild whoops from the yard. We stopped, and rushed for seats; but watched the comical antics of the toilers from behind the curtains. The delighted workmen, in close imitation of our movements, cut the figure eight, with many a bump and collision, shuffled and kicked their clumsily-shod feet in vain attempts at the step, whooping and tossing their arms the while in the greatest glee, till we were nearly suffocated with laughter.*

The weather took a sudden ill-turn one night lately. The mercury fell from evening heat of 84° (noon-tide sun 127°) to 57°, and next day a blight seemed to have fallen on animate and inanimate nature.

The bright dresses of the peasants and work-people had vanished, and given place to dingy and, in many cases, repulsive garments. The ancestral kaftans, or skin overcoats, which have probably served the grand or great grandfathers of the present owners, were brought out. We had to add an odeala† to the single bed sheet, and kindle the stoves.

People began to take in hammocks, and think of double windows, and supper in the garden was

* We have often seen them at their own peasant dance, which is a peculiar and laborious performance. The dancer assumes the position adopted by our boys on a slide when going through the operation of "shootin' craws," I think they call it. With arms akimbo they keep hopping and shooting out first one foot and then the other, in a most comical fashion.

† Coverlet.

given up. The cold only lasted about a week, however, and the atmosphere gradually warmed up again. But there was every sign that the Indian summer was all but over. Families were straggling in from country houses for the season, and beginning to put their town houses in order, in their usual leisurely manner. One Russian lady, who called on us, gave me a pressing invitation to visit her.

"I have much to do," she said, "before I can allow anybody to look upon my confusion. I have just had to turn the servants out *en masse.* I think all their relations were living on the premises and helping in the fights. I met the cook in the street one day, too drunk to find room to walk in the Cristchatic.* But in about two months I expect to be quite ready for visitors, and you must come and tell me all about England."

"I should be delighted," I replied; "but in two weeks I shall be back at home."

"In two weeks!! Gospiddy! Is it possible that any one could come so far, and run away again without taking time to breathe? My dear Mrs. S., do you hear! Going back in two weeks! How can you permit it, and Kieff so delightful in winter! Boshemoi! what nonsense!"

The cooler evenings made exercise pleasant, and the gentlemen could benefit themselves, and amuse us with gymnastic performances in the garden. These took various forms of muscular contortion,

* The Cristchatic is a street wide enough to allow fifteen carriages to drive abreast.

ground and lofty tumbling, and balancing feats with bottles, chairs, and other paraphernalia, in which, like the experimenting lecturers, they clearly demonstrated how the thing should be done, and if they nearly broke their heads and flattened their noses, instead of doing it, they were always able to explain that they "*could* do it easily if they were not so confoundedly out of practice."

They also indulged in cock-fighting—not the sanguinary sport of barbarous times—but the old-fashioned game in which a man can make himself more laughably ridiculous in personating the bird than by almost any other artificial means.

Evenings at home I have never touched upon; but we had many pleasant ones, made happy with music and conversation, grave and gay. Such evenings are more relished abroad than at home. A handful of countrymen, in a strange land, know the value of each other's company. There are no differences of rank and preference to be considered, no scandal to be talked over. We are all exiles, and the greatest man is he who has the latest news from home, or the best means of diverting his fellows.

Russian visitors, who know enough English to understand what we said, were delighted with those 'British nights."

German evenings were very different. Where Germans predominated the evening was spent at the table and dragged heavily away.

There were happy evenings spent by ourselves in the garden, too, when no caller disturbed the blissful peace.

The sounds of busy life were too far away to rise above the hum of winged insects, the moths circled round the reading-lamp, or sought destruction in the glass chimney. The crickets chirped, the frogs croaked and jumped, to the utter confusion of Kit, the huntress, who crouched in the shade, and sprang out upon them as they leaped through the bars of moonlight, but invariably mistook the shadow for the substance, and with a look of astonishment and shame at catching nothing, slunk back again into obscurity to think the problem out.

Alas, and alack a day! that those inevitable "last days" should come so swiftly upon us when we are happy. Soon, far from this, shall I be gathering my winter mantle round me with chilly shudder, as the damp east wind blows in from the sea, the dismal smoky fog descends upon dull, grey buildings and muddy streets, and blue sky and glorious sun are hidden from the view.

But, bright among the brightest pictures of the past, shall I ever cherish the merry friends I met, the happy days I spent, among thy green hills and pleasant places, oh, Kieff, of sunny memory!



CHAPTER XV.

Farewell to Kieff—Back by a Different Route Under Escort—A Little Amusement by the Way—Washing Made Easy—Station Restaurants—Warsaw—The Man from Taganrog makes his Appearance—"He wor a Railway on the Line"—Dreadful Experiences of the Man from Taganrog—Alexandrowo, and Inspection of Passports—Strong Desire of Pilgrim to Inflict Chastisement on Russian Officers—Man from Taganrog Sticks Fast—A Soft-hearted Guard—A Speechless Companion—Berlin—The Man from Taganrog Perseveres—He Makes the Pilgrim to Blush for her Countryman—"What is in the Box?"—The Man from Taganrog is Lost—Turns up Again—Flushing, and Rest for the Weary—Queenboro'—London—Left Alone—Adieu.



BLACK MONDAY at last, and all too soon, as usual. The holiday was so long to look forward to; and now it is over, so short to look back upon.

I am not quite convinced that there is "no place like home." It may be all very well if you have a nice, picturesque, thatched cottage, with warm sun

and balmy air always turned on, and roses all a-blowing, and birds singing gaily, and coming at your call. But if you happen to live in an ordinary town house,—if the birds are represented by half a dozen sooty, quarrelsome sparrows; if the climate you live in is rainy and east windy, and sleety and sloppy, and snowy, and generally disgusting in quick changes, for about eleven months in the year;—finally, if you have the firm conviction that before you are three months older you will have encountered all your dear old winter companions, the homely toothache, the lively neuralgia, the stiff, but steadfast, rheumatism, and the chirrupy cough, that drop in without ceremony, and take turn about in helping to shorten your days and fill up your evenings—"Home, sweet Home" has not all the attractions the poet claims for it, especially if you are leaving climatic advantages which happen just to suit you.

In any case, although the pilgrim is satisfied that he or she will sit down with a sigh of thankfulness when home is actually reached, there is always a most disagreeable feeling of discontent making itself manifest on the way there—a decided inclination to shortness of temper, a tendency to groundless melancholy, an uncomfortable "don't-feel-well" sensation, a conviction that your clothes are not sitting right, and your back hair is coming down, all these, I believe, are common feelings at the end of a jolly holiday. They go on increasing and worrying as your pleasant travel companions drop off, and increase to positive torment during the last

half hour of stopping, whistling, ticket checking aggravation, till at length you are cast forth alone at a jostling, rushing station, in an atmosphere you never knew to be so dismal before, feeling " beastly," and wanting to sit down on your trunk and have a real good cry.

I had decided to return by Warsaw and Berlin for several reasons. First, it was cheaper, and thoughts of economy take possession of the human mind immediately the pilgrim turns homeward. Then it promised a surer through journey and less changing ; but better than all, I had the chance of a male escort for a good part of the way, and that advantage was too great to be neglected.

Man is a useful animal in many ways, but on a long railway journey a gentleman who knows his way about is an unqualified blessing.

A little host of hearty friends gathered to see us off, and we left Kieff (in a compartment the Barin had secured for ourselves as far as Brest) amid a shower of good wishes and "God bless yous." Until we reached Warsaw the journey was eventless, and the prospect uninteresting. Poland is a very bare country to pass through, and the only thing of beauty I noticed at the stations was the policeman in his stylish dress of crimson and blue, with a crimson hat trimmed with black astracan and white cockade.

One laughable incident occurred as we journeyed through the poor country. A small boy had a cow to look after, and no rope to tether it with, and therefore kept fast hold of the animal's tail. This

seemed to suit the circumstances fairly well until the cow had a fly to swish off, and wanted its tail to do it with, and when it couldn't have it without the small boy attachment, it swished the boy right off his feet and slammed the fly with him, which must have been rather rough on the insect, not to mention the boy. The climax of comicality was reached when our engine whistled, and the cow took fright and bolted, and the boy, never seeming to think of letting go, was jolted and whisked and reversed and made to turn somersaults, till we were exhausted with laughing. The cow was still running when we lost sight of it, and still playing football with the poor little chap, who must have been kicked on every separate part of his body, and yet never allowed himself to be "kicked off."

Some brilliantly-dressed Polish peasant women attracted our attention too, and showed a way to get through a washing by as smart and simple a process as I have ever seen.

Their utensils consisted of a barrel full of water and a board laid flat on the ground. The clothes were dipped in the barrel, whirled round the head, and brought down with a smack on the board. Nice easy arrangement it seemed to me, and a capital way of "getting through" the garments.

We passed many villages of those uncouth huts which seem to suit the humble Russian's ideas of a home. The house is very much like our own Highland sheiling, but much more curious, from a naturalist's point of view. There were also several of the kind common in Roumania—a low circular

roof-work of branches covering a hole dug in the ground. This kind of house is cool and airy in summer.

In winter the snow covers it over and makes it as comfortable as the back parlour of a pigstye.

. . . . .

Thanks to my attentive escort, I travelled *à la princesse*. Ere I had time to know I was hungry, a beautifully cooked chicken and some wine were placed before me, and before I had time to think of yawning for the cup that cheers, a delicious glass of tea was placed temptingly on my coupé table. Had I been alone, I should probably have starved in a land of plenty rather than risk being left behind.

I do not think I have spoken of the splendidly appointed refreshment rooms on Russian railways. The ancient sandwich and venerable bun are as unknown here as the haughty damsel who dispenses those dainties at an English station, and looks with cold disdain upon the intruder who disturbs her *tête-à-tête* with the interesting male creature with the eye-glass and cigarette. One can get anything in the station restaurants. Hot or cold meats, luxurious feasts or frugal snacks, are always ready and waiting to be devoured.

Pleasant talk, reading and sleep made the day and night between Kieff and Brest seem short. At Brest we had to change for Warsaw. At Warsaw all was confusion, as we were deposited at a terminus, and had to be transported, luggage and all, in a carriage, to the opposite end of the town, to make a fresh start by another railway.

Through tickets are not to be had for this journey, and re-registration of luggage has also to be gone through.

Warsaw looked quaint and interesting, but one sees all one need care for in that drive from one end of the town to the other. So, at least, I was told by an English medical doctor and his wife, who left Kieff two days before me, and had spent the two days in Warsaw, and found it time thrown away.

There was no delay in starting, and we were soon off again, but "the scene was changed." We no longer had a compartment to ourselves. The carriage was full, and all the gentlemen smoked, smoked continually, till I felt saturated with narcotic poison, and was very glad to get out at Kutno for a little air and a glass of tea to dispel the effects of the cigarettes.

Kutno had nothing about itself to make it linger in my memory, but it was here that the man from Taganrog broke in upon my existence and stayed there like an ancient mariner without a romance, till I came to look upon him like a haunting conscience and to wonder what I had done to deserve him. He was English, the man from Taganrog, and very low-class English. I should not have been surprised to meet him on an East London platform, or even in the Crystal Palace, with his "old woman" on a bank holiday. But at a Polish lunch bar, trying to get a waiter to understand in rich cockney that he "wasn't the sort of man to be took in, and if he thought he could cheat

'im heasy, he wos a hass! cos he had seed lots o' his kind," he seemed quite out of place.

In an evil moment I smiled at the incongruous idea of those two foreigners speaking their minds to each other in equally incoherent terms, and the cockney catching me smiling, guessed my nationality at once, and said, "You are English, ma'am, tell me what to pay. I believe I pays 'em double every time." "You had better do as I do," I replied, "hold out a handful of copecks, and let them take what they want. If you are cheated, it is not to a great extent, and when you don't know it does not harm you."

"I wor a railway on the line," said my new acquaintance, in an unexpected burst of confidence; "an' me an' my mate, we goes to Africa, an' we makes our pile. I wor a Londoner, an' I goes back there; but my mate he goes to Taganrog. So he writes to me, my mate does, an' says I might take a trip to Roohsia to see him, *and I did.*"

The man from Taganrog put a mournful emphasis on the last words, and stopped there; and the pause spoke volumes. The idea of a man like this, not only ignorant of foreign languages, but painfully wanting in expression in his own, travelling entirely without luggage, dressed as if he had left his house hastily on some matter of urgency a street or so off, and meant to go back immediately to finish his toilet, going on a visit to Russia, where a person is judged entirely by his appearance, argued either an intense stupidity or masterful go-a-headness, and it was sufficiently apparent that the

latter quality did not belong to the man from Taganrog.

"You will have seen stranger things in Russia than you did in Africa," I remarked, as the man showed no inclination to go, and I felt bound to say something. "Have you been long in Taganrog?"

"I've been five week in Rooshia," replied the man from Taganrog; "an' I've seen lots; morn'n I want to see in all my born days. You see when I gets to Taganrog, my mate has gone to another place with a orful name I don't recolleck. My mate had been and got married."

There was a full explanation in these words. The man from Taganrog had evidently accepted a married man's thoughtless "drop in some evening" with the guilelessness of bachelor simplicity. He had mistaken a general civility for a sincere desire to renew an old friendship, and jumped at a welcomeless invitation.

"Well, when I get's to —— that place, an' that waren't heasy, mind you, wot does I find? Why, my mate have gone to another place with a wuss name than the larst! Wollocksilicksky, or somethin', I forget."

"Dear me!" I remarked, repressing a laugh as I perceived the hand of the mate's better-half in this not-at-home state of affairs. I could imagine the angry woman flying from a persistent bore whom her husband's folly had threatened her with.

"So. I goes to the other place, an' wha' d'yer think? Why, my mate he warn't there neither!"

"Dear me!"

"No! An' what's wuss, I *never* sees my mate at all, cos I gets all mixed up an loses the way, an' them Rooshians keeps a orderin' and arskin' for papers, and wantin' to see my baggage, and not believin' when I says I ain't got no baggage."

"But had you really no baggage?"

"No! You see I counts on seein' my mate at Taganrog, so I don't take nothin' but what goes in my pockets."

"O—oh!" I replied faintly, instinctively drawing a little farther away from the man from Taganrog.

"So after huntin' about half of Rooshia, I gets back to Taganrog, and comes off home. I say, don't them Rooshians cheat you? They does me; I believe they'd steal their father's front tee——"

"Just about to start, Miss Morris," said my escort, entering at this moment.

I hastily bade the man from Taganrog good-bye, and made for the train, and we were soon on the move again.

Alexandrowo next, and a thorough inspection of papers. We were kept locked up in the train until an important official arrived, who collected the passports and carried them off.

Now woe unto the spy, or the suspect whose appearance varies a hair's breadth from his description, and Heaven protect the evil-doer who dreamt of sneaking out of the country without leave.

The papers taken up, we were liberated and told we had an hour to wait.

Within the restaurant (which is the only waiting room), a slight bump behind caused me to turn.

A man holding a wooden box in his arms like a baby, stood at my back, smiling a familiar "happy-to-renew-your-acquaintance" sort of smile. It was *he*, the soiled, unshaven man from Taganrog.

"I wor——" he began, but I noticed a lady at the other end of the room, and, muttering an excuse, fled for protection. The hour passed, and we were called to take our places. Locked in again, we waited expectantly for the haughty official. At last our turn came, and each one had to give his or her name to the "grand vizier," and my Scotch one proved too much for the great one's intellect. I repeated it three times, but he could make nothing of it; and began to look suspiciously upon me, as if the fact of having a name a Russian could not pronounce was strong evidence that I was not all right.

Losing my patience, I dared to point to my passport, which I had seen plainly in his hand all the time. If I had suddenly pointed a revolver at his high-horn countenance the effect would not have been more startling.

He drew back with a melodramatic start and glared ominously upon me, while I stared innocently in return.

Point a finger at *him!* a great high Russian official humbug! Swords and sugar-sticks! The world was evidently going to the dogs when a woman dared do this thing!

The great man continued to glare until, seeing I did not melt, or shrivel up, or anything, he gave me my passport and went away. We thought all was

right now, but no! after some more weary waiting a still haughtier humbug came round to see if no one had come up through the floor or got in though a crack since the first one's visit, and he had *his* share of glaring and scowling to do, till it was scarcely possible to put up with it.

Gospiddy! If woman ever gets the reforming of official mankind to do, what a knocking together of male heads there will be!

At length we got away, and soon after reached Thorn, where our luggage had to be examined, and here my escort and I had to part company. But the worst was over; German conductors were put on the train; we were to travel straight to Berlin, and I had nothing more to dread.

I was undecided for a moment between the certain cigarettes of the mixed carriages, and the possible small families of the ladies' reserved, when a strong aroma of distilled waters was wafted towards me, and *he*, the man from Taganrog, stood before me, clasping his box in his arms.

"I see you part from the gentleman, miss," said he, "an' I am not goin' third class no furder. If you don't mind, I'll look arter yer."

My mind made itself up in an instant. I *did* mind, and with hasty thanks I made a dive for the ladies' compartment.

As very often happens, the damen wagen was empty; but I did not object to that. With a good book and a mind at ease, one need never feel lonely, although the fatherly conductor did not seem to understand such companionship, and

gave me a look of deep sympathy on his first call.

The next time he came round and found me sitting like a solitary owl, staring out into the darkness, his kindly feelings overcame him, and he broke out into words,—

"Allein, Madame, allein?" he said, clasping his hands, and shaking his head. "Ach! allein ist nicht gut, nein, nein! Allein ist nicht gut!" ("Alone, Madam, alone! Ah! it is not good to be alone, no, no! it is not good to be alone.")

Next time he passed the good-hearted creature got so pathetic over the situation that I thought he would burst into tears, but he hurried away instead, and presently returned with another solitary lady, and I laughed the internal laugh of the elder Mr. Weller, as the lady bowed gracefully, and said "Merci, Monsieur."

My early French lessons have lapsed for want of use, and I could not expect a companion to be greatly edified by such irrelevant reminiscences of "Havet's Grammar" as, "Have you the dog of the uncle with the whiskers?" "No! I have the cat of my aunt with the gold spectacles."

Ours was a silent companionship, for I did not trouble the French pilgrim about the domestic pets of imaginary relatives, and she had not a single word of any other than her own language to cheer *me* with.

Morning came, and with it Berlin, and I got out and hailed a porter. As I did so I caught sight of a familiar figure with a wooden box in his arms,

going from carriage to carriage as if in earnest search for some one.

'Twas the devoted "railway on the line," aus Afric, aus London, aus Taganrog, and I instinctively knew myself to be the object of his search, and fled from my would-be protector. I sought the farthest corner of the refreshment room, and partitioned myself off with a big newspaper, feeling unworthy of such devotion, and preferring to breakfast alone.

I had my usual good fortune in finding a most obliging English-speaking waiter, who procured my ticket, got my roubles changed, and did everything he could think of to enhance my comfort.

After breakfast I went out to see my luggage registered, and caught sight of my friend the pile-maker in the distance, standing clasping his box, alone and disconsolate.

I had a telegram to despatch, and on coming out of the office, found the doorway blocked by the man from Taganrog.

Gracious Heavens! was I to be pursued by this wretched being like a relentless fate?

"I wor takin' my ticket, an' this is what they gave me back," he said, holding out some change in a very dirty hand. "Have I been took in again?"

"I don't know, I can't help you! Good gracious! an African railway should have *some* intelligence!"

"When I wor a railway on the line in Africa," returned the man from Taganrog, "I 'ad a mate, but my mate he gets mar——"

I could bear no more. Crushing past the in-

sufferable bore, I engaged a porter to call me when the train was ready, and took refuge in the ladies' room.

Off again, slowly, in company with several nice people, and am congratulating myself on having seen the last of my "old man of the sea" when the door is suddenly thrown open, and a quantity of humanity is unceremoniously bundled in. The figure is helped to disentangle itself and set on a seat, to diffuse a spirituous taint to the atmosphere.

My heart sinks within me! *It is the man from Taganrog!*

"Glad to find you at larst, Miss," he says, nodding familiarly to me. "I thought you'd missed the train. Gimme up that box, mister, it's waluable."

I maintained a dignified silence, and burned inwardly as the German ladies and gentlemen looked on amusedly, and seemed puzzled to make out the bond of connection between the man from Taganrog and myself.

"I wor a railway on the line in Africa," began the pest to the gentleman sitting next to him, who understood no word of English; but the bore didn't mind; he went on with his narrative till the first stoppage, when he went out for refreshments, taking his box with him.

My fellow-travellers, with the freedom common to *companions de voyage* everywhere but in Britain, plied me with questions, and I gave them a brief recital of all I knew regarding the man from

Taganrog, and the claims he had to my acquaintanceship. The train started, and there was no sign of the missing one. The Germans, in hurried council, agreed that it would be a pity to leave the stupid fellow behind, and rushing to the window, the gentlemen shouted, "Noch einer! noch einer! in chorus.

The train is stopped, the man from Taganrog is dragged out of the restaurant and pushed into the compartment, where he sits beaming upon us as if he were enjoying the ordinary pleasures of travel, which it would be a fraud to deprive him of.

"You haf—something ver gut—a-a-h," began a pleasant elderly German, struggling to be agreeable in our language; "something you loav—in das tronk, ach?"

"I dunno as I catch you, mister! Wot's the old 'un drivin' at, Miss?"

"He says you must have something precious in the box," I translate shortly, and resume my book.

"Oh, wot's in the box? A walable picter frame," replies the man, pulling open the lid, and exhibiting a pretty carved specimen of Russian peasant work. "Now, you won't guess wot I paid for this 'ere—why 'ere's another station!"—and the man from Taganrog shut up his box, and, in spite of remonstrances, went out for more refreshment.

Again the train started. Again the chorus of "Noch einer! noch einer!" stopped the train, and once more the dragging and pushing and tumbling was repeated, and the man from Taganrog smiled

upon us the smile of maudlin enjoyment. At the third stoppage the same thing was repeated, but the chorus had no effect. The place of the procrastinator was vacant, and my companions condoled and sympathized with me, jokingly, on my sad loss, but I gave vent to a sigh of relief, and bore it with equanimity.

At the fourth stoppage the door opened, and the man from Taganrog coolly resumed his seat amid shouts of laughter, in which I did not join.

"I wor on the last carriage," he explained, "but it wor a close shave. Them porters bumps you orful."

Flushing at last, and a berth to lie down in. Oh, heavenly rest! I had had no natural sound sleep since leaving Kieff, and that narrow cot was a bed of roses to my exhausted anatomy. The passage must have been good, for I slept the whole way, and when I awoke people were getting their traps ready for an overhaul at Queenboro'.

As I had no wines, brandies, or cigars, I disturbed me not, but I noticed many whose consciences seemed by no means so easy.

The man from Taganrog excited the officer's suspicion by his declaration of no luggage, and when he had taken the frame out of the mysterious box, he examined the receptacle with extreme care, but having bumped it, and thumped it, and shaken it, and measured it without discovering anything, he handed it back, saying,—

"Been to Russia, did you say?"

"Taganrog," replied the man of that ilk laconically.

"And no baggage? Well, you *are* a rummy cove?"

I could have told him so at first. "Rummy," expressive vulgarism though it be, did not describe the peculiarities of the man from Taganrog.

The minion of fortune still hovered about me, but all the rest of my companions had departed but one lady. The skies were bleak, the air was cold, the manners of the people were chilly—I was beginning to feel wretched.

LONDON! and the last "gay young companion has faded and gone."

I am alone again, and as I sit back in the cab that is taking me Eustonwards through the streets crowded with shop-girls and early clerks, I mournfully repeat the honest conductor's remark,—

"Ach, allein ist nicht gut! Allein ist nicht gut!"

THE END.

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